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Kara swift to  
get back into  
after injury

# THE TIMES

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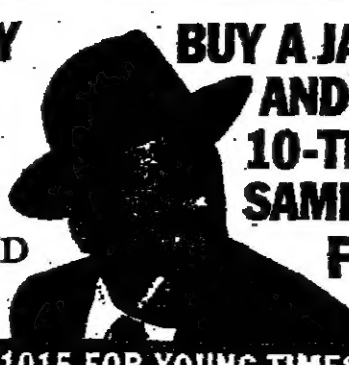
SATURDAY AUGUST 2 1997

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**SHOULD THEY  
HAVE TAKEN  
A MARRIAGE  
EXAM?**

WEEKEND

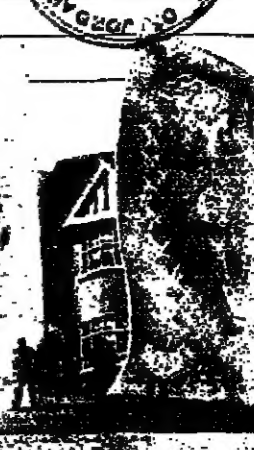


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Record 57 lords in honours lists

## Blair's peers take on Tory majority

By Philip Webster and Andrew Pierce

FIFTY-SEVEN new life peers are named today, the largest number of peers appointed in a single announcement in modern times, as Tony Blair begins his attempt to reverse the inbuilt Tory domination of the House of Lords, and big business shows its willingness to sign up to new Labour.

At the same time John Major rewards some of his most trusted allies, handing out honours to former Cabinet ministers as well as his former driver, cleaner and switchboard supervisor in a 50-strong resignation list.

The new contingent of peers provides consolation for several senior Tories who lost their seats on May 1 and a lease of life for many Labour MPs who stood down before the election.

The Prime Minister announces 31 new working Labour peers, embracing an array of leading industrialists who, by indicating their readiness to serve, will be expected to attend the Lords regularly, take part in debates and vote. There are 11 Liberal Democrat working peers and five Tories.

The business recruits to the Lords benches include Michael Levy, director of M and G Records; George Simpson, managing director of the General Electric Company; Michael Montague, chairman of Superframe and Montague International; David Sainsbury, chairman and chief executive of Sainsbury's; and Andrew Stone, joint managing director of Marks & Spencer.

From the arts the crime writer Ruth Rendell and Sir David Putnam, the film producer, will be Labour peers.

Mrs Rendell will be sitting opposite her fellow crime writer P.D. James, who sits as a Conservative, as Baroness James of Holland Park. Helena Kennedy, QC, also becomes a Labour peer.

In all, 15 new Conservative peers are announced, ten in Mr Major's list and five in the working peers list. The latter are Tristan Galt-Jones, the former Foreign Office minister; Michael Morris, the former deputy Speaker; and

three other former Tory ministers, Sir John Cope, Sir Wyn Roberts and Sir Hector Monro.

As *The Times* reported yesterday, the most prominent absentee from Mr Major's list was Norman Lamont, the former Chancellor. Because of his former seniority he would have expected a peerage but was not offered one. Sources close to Mr Major denied a revenge motive. Mr Lamont becomes the first former Chancellor in recent memory not to have been given a peerage after intimating that he was prepared to take one.

Sir Tim Bell, advertising guru under both Baroness Thatcher and Mr Major, did not receive even though the other members of the famous

ship in the final years of his premiership to Michael Heseltine is underlined by his award of Companion of Honour to the former Deputy Prime Minister.

Although Mr Blair remains committed to removing the voting rights of hereditary peers he wants in the meantime to correct the imbalance that has grown between the parties during Labour's long years of opposition.

Before the latest appointments, there were 327 Conservative hereditary peers, compared with just 15 Labour, and 152 Tory life peers, compared with 11 Labour.

His new list of 31 was heavily dominated by former MPs including Bryan Davies, Peter Hardy, Norman Hogg, Robert Hughes, Greville Janner, Alf Morris, Stan Orme, Stuart Randall, Sir Harold Walker and Michael Watson. Some of these MPs failed to find new seats when the boundaries of their constituencies were redrawn before the last election. Others simply retired.

Also on the list is Roy Hughes. There was controversy earlier this week when he left slip to his local newspaper that he was due to get a peerage. Mr Hughes announced just before the general election that he would not fight his safe seat, making way for Alan Howarth, the Tory MP who switched to Labour.

Party leaders had been keen to find a seat for Mr Howarth and the peerage for Mr Hughes will fuel suspicion that he was offered it as an incentive to give up his seat.

Union appointees include Tom Burlinson, Labour Party treasurer and deputy general secretary of the GMB; Garfield Davies, of USDAW; and Clive Brooke, joint general secretary of the Public Services Tax and Commerce Union.

The new Liberal Democrat working peers announced include the former MP Diana Maddock and Emma Nicholson, who defected from the Tories at the last election.

More honours, page 6



David Sainsbury: one of the new business peers

image, took a Peter Guinness, and Maurice Saatchi, have already been ennobled. Peers are given, however, to Norman Blackwell, former head of the Downing Street policy unit; Tony Newton, former Commons leader; Ian Lang, former Board of Trade President; former Cabinet ministers Roger Freeman and David Hunt; Dame Janet Fookes, the former deputy Speaker; and former ministers Lord James Douglas-Hamilton and Sir Terence Higgins.

Sir Cranley Orslove and Dame Jill Knight, former granddaughters of the influential 1922 Committee of Tory backbenchers, are also rewarded for their loyalty by being made peers.

Mr Major's close relation-



Ruth Rendell who was announced yesterday as a surprise Labour working peer

## Rival Queens of Crime

By Mark Henderson

A BATTLE, fought in the nation's bookshops, is to be joined in the House of Lords. Britain's claimants to the title of Queen of Crime will soon be facing each other in Westminster after yesterday's announcement that Ruth Rendell is to join her rival P.D. James in the Upper House.

Mrs Rendell is to be made a Labour working peer, while Baroness James of Holland Park has sat on the Conservative benches in the Lords since she was included in John Major's New Year's Honours list in 1991.

The pair have written more than 30 bestselling thrillers between them, and their detectives, Inspectors Wexford (Rendell) and Dalgleish (James) have become television favourites.

Phyllis is a great friend,

and it will be great to join her in the House of Lords," Mrs Rendell said yesterday. "We have always had opposite political positions but I don't think that will cause any more strife between us now than it has in the past. It will be nice to have a familiar face on the

other side of the house," Mrs Rendell said. She and Baroness James had enjoyed each other's work and had never felt they were in competition. "I respect her hugely, and I'm not sure there's really much rivalry there. If there is rivalry it is of the healthiest sort."

Baroness James, 76, who is away on holiday this weekend, was one of the first people Mrs Rendell tried to contact when the news was announced yesterday. Baroness James's secretary said that she would be delighted by Mrs Rendell's peerage and would look forward to debating with her.

Mrs Rendell, 67, was an unexpected appointment who appears to have leap-frogged other Labour supporters from the arts world such as Melvyn Bragg and John Mortimer. Her peerage came as a surprise even to her. "I had not

Continued on page 2, col 1



P.D. James: sits on Conservative benches

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## Parents to lose rights over class size pledge

By David Charter, Education Correspondent

PARENTS will lose long-standing rights to admission at popular primary schools as the price of the Government's election pledge to keep class sizes to 30, it emerged yesterday.

Under the plans, headteachers will be required to close their rolls when classes reach the 30 limit. Parents will lose their right to appeal if they are turned away from a popular school and are forced to send their children to unpopular schools with empty desks. The move, which will revive the "neighbourhood school", is likely to see catchment areas shrink and fuel house prices surrounding the best state schools.

Provisional figures for 1997 show that nearly a quarter of England's 61,000 infant school classes have 31 or more pupils. Ministers were accused of taking the "cheapest option" for limiting class sizes. "It does not cost any extra cash to tell children they have to go to the school down the road which

has got room. Then they won't have to create extra space in the popular school," said Chris Davis, spokesman for the National Primary Headteachers Association.

The Education Department rejected the idea that thousands of children would be forced into poor schools. A spokesman said money from abolishing the Assisted Places Scheme would provide 2,000 new teachers to add extra classes at popular schools.

He said: "We want headteachers to sit down and talk about issues such as planning places. We are phasing this in gradually, so it will be the norm by 2002."

A letter has been sent to grammar schools proposing that 20 per cent of parents from the primary schools they serve would need to sign a petition to force a vote on changing them to comprehensives. Where selection is widespread in a local authority, every parent will be eligible to vote.

## New York police foil bomb plot

New York police foiled a plot by at least three Hamas terrorists to bomb the New York subway's Atlantic Avenue station. The men, thought to be suicide bombers, were arrested in a Brooklyn apartment after a fourth informed on them. The police had been totally unaware of the plot.

And in Israel, the authorities arrested more than 50 suspected Islamic extremists in connection with Wednesday's Jerusalem market bomb attacks. Page 12

## Double beds and pubs on Virgin

Virgin Atlantic Airways plans to offer travellers double beds in private rooms, pubs, showers and exercise facilities on its new generation of Airbus A340s, which it has ordered in a £6 billion expansion.

The aircraft, which will carry up to 375 passengers each and are quieter and larger than Virgin's existing A340s, will enter service in 2002 on routes to the West Coast of America and the Far East. Page 23

## Duke of Edinburgh bows out at Cowes

By Emma Wilkins

THE Duke of Edinburgh is to end 50 years of royal sailing tradition by playing a non-competitive role at Cowes Regatta for the first time.

When the event opens today, the Duke will watch from the deck of John Paul Getty's private yacht *Talitha G* instead of taking his usual place at the helm of his *Yeoman XXVIII*. He has missed only three regattas since 1947 and this year will be the first that he has not been registered as the skipper of his own yacht.

But the Duke will, it is believed, continue to enjoy sailing and may join in some races during the eight-day Cowes Week. There has been speculation that his decision not to register is prompted by arthritis in his wrist and hand.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman, however, insisted that the Duke was in excellent health. He remains a keen carriage driver and shows little sign of reducing his large number of official engagements. "It is very much a

personal thing for the Duke whether he sails or not. Even if he is not in the competitions, there are plenty of other things for him to do at Cowes," the spokesman said.

The Duke, with ex-King Constantine of Greece, an accomplished sailor, at his side, won his first race for 30 years in 1955 as captain of *Yeoman XXVIII*.

But it is as Admiral of the Royal Yacht Squadron that he has helped to influence modern Cowes Week more than any other individual. It was at his suggestion that the yachting clubs formed the Cowes Combined Clubs to run the event, which this year has attracted a record entry of more than 900 yachts.

Captain Dan Brady, secretary of the Cowes Combined Clubs, said: "The Duke's contribution has been immense. If this is the end of his sailing participation in Cowes Week, it is a very sad day."

Head start, page 37

## Surgeon taken off duty for letting boy join in operation

By Ian Murray and Joanna Bale

A SENIOR surgeon has been suspended from duty while his hospital investigates a complaint that he allowed a teenage schoolboy to assist him in an operation.

The incident is said to have occurred while the boy, aged 16, was spending a week on work experience at the Mayday Hospital in Croydon, south London. According to evidence given to the hospital management, the boy was allowed to follow the doctor on his hospital rounds and on July 4 was scrubbed up and taken into an operating theatre. He is said to have been allowed to hold a retractor keeping the incision wound open while the surgeon carried out the operation.

The surgeon, who works principally in other hospitals in the south London area, was suspended from duty at Mayday at the start of this week on his return from holiday.

Keith Ford, the hospital trust's chief executive, said last night: "Suspension is to allow time for facts to be gathered. A disciplinary hearing has been scheduled for next week and a statement will be issued by the end of the week. To make any further comment would be prejudicial to the correct conduct of the hearing."

A spokesman for the Department of Health said: "We are aware that there was an incident in which it was alleged that a student on work experience was in an operating theatre... on the face of it this would appear to be rather worrying."

Dr John Spiers, chairman of the Patients' Association, said: "Given the attitudes of some consultants nothing would

surprise me. It shocks me... nobody should be in an operating theatre who is not properly trained and regulated.

"We do not want bob-a-job week in the operating theatre. What we want is public information so that patients can judge whether surgeons are any good. It seems that some consultants think they are a law unto themselves."

Michael Sutcliffe, who retired recently as consultant surgeon at Mayday, said: "I know the doctor concerned well and he is a surgeon of the very first rank. I am certain he would have done nothing which would have in any way endangered a patient."

In November 1995, a 17-year-old A-level student put five stitches into the leg of a woman patient during two visits to Bradford Royal Infirmary. Some of the stitches were incorrectly inserted and had to be removed and replaced by the woman's own doctor. The hospital held an inquiry and apologised to the woman, but no one was disciplined.

In February 1995, a surgeon at Trelliske Hospital, Truro, Cornwall, let his theatre nurse remove an appendix. Both were suspended, allowed to return to work, but they retired shortly afterwards.

In July 1996, a nurse at Clatterbridge Hospital, Wirral on Merseyside admitted that she had performed more than 200 unsupervised minor operations. These were all approved by doctors, involving such processes as removing cysts and taking biopsies. Other nurses have routinely been allowed to strip out veins for bypass operations.



MOOR



THE MERRIER

COWES WEEK	8-9 August
SW COASTWAY TALK MATCH & AUSTRALIA TROPHY BRIDGE	7-11 August
EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL	10-24 August
FINAL NATION TROPHY, LONDON	6 September
BURGHLEY HORSE TRIALS, STAMFORD	11-14 September
SIR LEO STALDER, DORSET	15 September
LAST NIGHT OF THE PLEAS	15 September
BATHFORD HANDBALL	18-21 September
THE FESTIVAL AND GREAT SUNDAY, GREAT MILTON	1-4 October
THE WESTFORD OPERA FESTIVAL	18 October - 2 November

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# Purge on playing fields of England

Visiting colonials blamed for upsurge in bad behaviour at public school cricket games, Nicholas Wood reports

PUBLIC school headmasters are planning a purge of unsporting conduct on the cricket field amid mounting concern about bad language, cheating and dissent.

A move towards more fixtures against aggressive and noisy touring sides from Australian and South African schools, which model their tactics on their ruthless Test sides, is being blamed for the decline of the Corinthian spirit on the country's most exclusive playing fields. The bad example set by domestic professional and club cricketers, and the influence of television, are also causing concern.

Neil Gamble, head of the 700-pupil Exeter School, said he intended to press for a crackdown on bad behaviour at the next meeting of the sports committee of The Headmasters' Conference.

There is no question that the prevalence of sledging [verbally abusing] the batsman has increased markedly over the last five years and that has percolated down to schools, because once the school season is over boys go off and play in leagues around the country. Mr Gamble, a committee member at Devon County Cricket Club, added: "There is a lack of civility and honesty."

Pressure for action on the conference, which represents the country's top 240 fee-paying schools, follows a spat in June between Marlborough and Radley colleges that has led to the cancellation of



Gamble crackdown

all sporting fixtures between the two schools. Radley fielders were accused of verbally abusing the home batsmen, who reacted by refusing to declare, as is the custom in school matches.

Alarm about declining standards of sportsmanship has been heightened by other ugly incidents in schoolboy cricket this summer. After an under-17 match in Kent, a boy was frogmarched into the opposition dressing room and forced to apologise to the whole side. His crime was spitting at the wicket-keeper after being bowled.

Some of the worst scenes came in a match between Tonbridge School — Lord (Colin) Cowdrey of Tonbridge's alma mater and one of England's strongest junior teams — and a visiting South African touring side, Grey's High School from Port Elizabeth. It was reportedly described by one master as the "most unpleasant game of cricket I have ever seen".

The umpires had to rebuke the Tonbridge captain after one of the South African batsmen complained that he had been called "a penis" by one of the fielders. But the South Africans also overstepped the mark. The umpires warned their captain about "backchat" from his fielders and reprimanded a bowler for showing dissent.

Paul Taylor, cricket master at Tonbridge, admitted that spectators at the match on July 9, at the end of a three-day festival, had been shocked by the racket coming from the ground. But the game had been particularly hard fought because both sides were striving to safeguard their unbeaten records.

"The difficulty is that you are asking boys to play very competitively and aggressively and intimidate through actions and not through words," Mr Taylor said. "Teaching that line is very difficult when they see what goes on in the professional game."

He was in no doubt that schoolboy cricket had changed in the past decade, and that the trend for playing more matches against gritty



Middlesex against Nottinghamshire at Lord's in 1802, when cricket was a game for gentlemen amateurs and "sledging" was unknown

## Village club fears catch in £290,000 new ground

A VILLAGE cricket team has refused to use its new £290,000 ground for fear of spoiling its chances of winning the league for the first time (Paul Wilkinson writes).

The side from Studley Royal in North Yorkshire became the envy of most small clubs when it won £145,000 funding from the National Lottery towards new pitches and a pavilion. Another £20,000 came from Paul Sykes, the multimillionaire who offered to fund

anti-European Community candidates in the general election and who lives in the village. Club members raised the rest.

The players were scheduled to move onto the eight-acre site at the start of the summer, but the early-season drought left the pitch without any grass. The team returned to the wicket where it has played for 100 years, next to a deer park. Now the wetter weather means the new pitch is ready for play, but the first team has refused

to use it. Robert Sowray, 50, the club's former chairman, said: "They know every bump and crack on the old pitch and think a change at this vital stage of the season could cost them the title."

Studley Royal is third in the top division of the Nidderdale League, four points behind the joint leaders with four games to go. In 15 years it has never finished top. The club has 150 players — 50 more than the village population — in three senior and eight junior sides.

## THE BOYS OWN



In the world of Boys Own, spectators schoolboys showed nothing but silent respect for cricketers

## Benefit cheats made £100,000 in 'cottage industry' of fraud

BY A STAFF REPORTER

FOR more than seven years Lynne Price and her out-of-work husband amazed neighbours by keeping six children in opulent style and taking extensive holidays abroad.

The couple made no secret of their wealth, furnishing their large bungalow in Cottenham, Cambridgeshire, in white leather, installing gold-plated bathroom fittings and laying fitted carpet throughout. Last night, however, they were both in jail after fraud investigators discovered their wealth had been based on a systematic abuse of the benefits system which amassed more than £100,000.

The children's 35-year-old mother, who is expecting her seventh child next month, wept as she was sentenced to four years at Cambridge Crown Court by Judge James Hargrave, who condemned her as a "leech on the public purse". He described her as the undoubted brains

behind the scheme, which she operated with her barely literate husband, Drewary Price. When investigators from the Department of Social Security visited their home they found £400 in cash and evidence of how she had accumulated more than £100,000 in high-interest savings accounts, many of them in her children's names. They also discovered tickets worth more than £3,000 for a holiday on the Caribbean island of Antigua.

Jailing Price and her husband, the judge condemned them as "cheats and frauds who plundered taxes paid by people working hard to make ends meet."

Price travelled miles to benefit offices across London and the South East, each time carrying a different family biography and history, giving precise dates of birth for various members of children and giving a permutation of addresses to collect benefit.

Often she would take the children along with her and was scrupulous never to forget which line she told at the different offices.

Andrew Williams, for the prosecution, described Price's fraudulent activities as "almost a full-time job, running all over the country servicing each of the false identities, signing on, cashing cheques. It was a virtual cottage industry."

She pleaded guilty to 16 specimen counts of cheating the benefits system. She also asked for ten similar offences to be taken into consideration.

A jury acquitted her husband of taking part in false accounting as they accepted he was not sufficiently literate to fill out the claim forms. He had told the court he could not remember the genuine ages of his children and referred to the youngest — who is aged five — simply as "boy". He told investigators he

believed the family's lifestyle, including a holiday in Cyprus and a planned fortnight in the Caribbean, was paid out of a legacy from his mother-in-law and the generosity of his father-in-law. He was found guilty of four specimen charges of obtaining at least £15,000 benefit by deception over five years and jailed for four years.

Mr Williams described how Price would use addresses connected to her extended family and said she had enjoyed a comfortable upbringing in Edmonton, north London and had clearly been well educated before she married into the travelling community.

He said she always flaunted her wealth, from the expensive gold jewellery to the decor in the family's bungalow, which he described as "opulently if gaudily furnished — not all to our own taste, but nevertheless luxurious".

## Crash victim lauds gallant Portillo

BY EDNA WILKINS

MICHAEL PORTILLO, the former Defence Secretary, behaved like an officer and a gentleman when a woman crashed her car into the Prince of Wales's gatepost.

Mr Portillo jumped from his official car to offer help to the woman, who had swerved to avoid another car outside Highgrove House, near Tetbury, Gloucestershire.

The account of Mr Portillo's gallantry was given at Cirencester Magistrates' Court where Stuart Rochester, 62, was found guilty of driving without due care and attention.

Jacqui Harrison, 28, told the court that she swerved to avoid Mr Rochester when he pulled out from behind a tractor driven by Tim Longhurst, a labourer at Highgrove. She crashed onto a grass verge and into the path of a car driven by a police officer, before hitting the royal gatepost.

Mrs Harrison, of Bradley



"I know you, don't I?" Jacqui Harrison asked Michael Portillo as he helped her from her car



Stoke, Bristol, said that Mr Portillo jumped from his Volvo to come to her aid. "He was very kind and considerate to me. He opened my car door and asked if I was all right. As soon as I looked up, I recognised him. I said, 'I know you, don't I?' He just smiled and said: 'Never mind that, are you OK?' Luckily I

wasn't injured and he helped me out of the car. He kept saying how brave I was and how calm I seemed after the crash."

Mr Portillo called the police and an ambulance on his mobile phone. He was on his way to the air tattoo at RAF Fairford when the accident happened in July last

year. "Mr Portillo went on to his engagement after he was sure I was all right. He even sent his driver back to see if I needed a lift home. He couldn't have been any kinder," Mrs Harrison said.

Mr Portillo gave evidence of Mr Rochester's driving: "The car began to overtake the tractor. When he did that it was close to the bend. My immediate reaction was that it looked a very dangerous manoeuvre."

"A car appeared in the opposite direction coming around the bend. The driver took evasive action by swerving to the left."

Outside the court Mr Portillo, who lost his Enfield Southgate seat at the general election, said: "We were a bit shaken up. The lady in the car was incredibly plucky. She had been through a terrible experience."

Mr Rochester, an accountant from Greeton, Northamptonshire, was fined £200 with £140 costs and his licence was endorsed with six points.



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# BSE cows 'suffer' in cash cuts stampede

Cattle for slaughter are jammed in markets, reports Michael Hornsby

CUTS by the Government in compensation for culled cows and in the number of abattoirs authorised to slaughter them are causing congestion at cattle markets and jeopardising animal welfare, say farmers and auctioneers.

Farmers with cattle more than 30 months old, which are banned for human consumption under BSE controls, have been rushing to get their animals to slaughter before the compensation cut comes into force on Monday. Some cattle markets have been forced to hold animals in lairage, or holding pens, for several days because they cannot find abattoirs to take them.

Jim Watson, of Midland Marts, which runs Banbury market, Oxfordshire, said: "We had to hold about 500 animals in our lairage for four to five days, milking them and providing bedding and water."

"These were animals that should have gone to slaughter the day after we received them. But orders were cancelled at the last minute because the abattoirs could not handle them."

David Lock, of Premier Livestock Auctioneers, which runs the Yeovil and Frome markets in Somerset, said that he had been inundated with calls over the past two weeks from farmers wanting to unload old cattle.

"We have had to turn most of them down because we could not find abattoirs able to take the animals. We are probably not getting more than 50 cattle away a week in each of our markets at the moment under the 30-months scheme, compared with 250 a week previously."

In a report to be broadcast tomorrow by BBC's Country-File programme, animal

health inspectors working for Somerset County Council say they have been alarmed by the number of old and unhealthy cows being delivered to local markets and then facing long journeys to find abattoirs able to receive them.

Glen Berry, a council inspector, told the programme: "Many are 'old ladies' that have gone through bouts of mastitis and are lame. According to law, these animals should be taken to the nearest place of slaughter but there is no near place for them to go any longer."

From Monday the compensation for old cows will be cut from £4.9p to 57.7p per kilogram liveweight. In a further cost-cutting measure, the maximum weight on which the compensation will be paid will be 500kg, making a maximum of £323 per cow. Mike Lambert, of the National Farmers' Union, said: "Up to now you could expect to get compensation of £600 to £700 for a good fat suckler (beef) cow."

Last month, the Intervention Board, the government agency administering the cut, cut the number of abattoirs authorised to slaughter old cattle from 42 to 26.

The Government says the cut is a justified cost measure because the number of old cattle being slaughtered and destroyed has dropped sharply since late last year. At one point up to 50,000 a week were being killed but the average now was 13,000, mainly elderly dairy cows.

Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister, dismissed the reports of market chaos as exaggerated and said that he had no evidence to support claims that cattle awaiting slaughter were not being properly looked after.

## Twins share common bond in priesthood



Yvonne Clarke and her sister, Jennifer Thomas, yesterday: "We love being priests; it is more than a job"

BY RUTH GLEDHILL  
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

JENNIFER THOMAS and Yvonne Clarke have become the first identical twins in Britain to be ordained women priests. The sisters, aged 38, have taken up positions in the Church of England with the diocese of Southwark in south-east London.

Mrs Clarke, who is married with three sons, is assistant curate of St Alban Mission Church in Merton. Miss Thomas has just been appointed vicar of Christ Church and St Paul in Forest Hill.

Mrs Clarke said: "Our parents are very proud of us. It is something we both always wanted to do."

"We have three brothers and another sister and I think our parents expected the boys to go into the church, not us girls. Jennifer and I are very close and we talk to each other about our work. We love being priests; it is more than a job."

St Ethelburga, the medieval church in the City of London severely damaged by an IRA bomb in 1993, could be rebuilt in time for the millennium. The news came when the Bishop of London, the Right Rev Richard Chartres, announced yesterday that the architects Purcell Miller Tritton had been selected for the job of turning the ruins into a centre for reconciliation and peace.

A prominent City firm is understood to be considering a £1 million donation to the project to mark the turn of the millennium.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Football trial jury home for weekend

Jurors in the football match-fixing trial were given the weekend off after failing to reach verdicts. They had spent more than three hours deliberating after the judge's summing up at Winchester Crown Court yesterday. Bruce Grobbelaar, John Fashanu and Hans Segers, and a businessman, Heng Swan Lim, deny rigging match results.

#### Comic in court

The comedian Eddie Large appeared before Woodspring Magistrates, Somerset, charged under his real name, Edward McGinnis, with damaging a car. The case was adjourned to August 15.

#### Murder denial

David Frost, 21, denied at Bristol Crown Court the rape and murder of Louise Smith, 18, after a Christmas party in 1995. Mr Frost, a student, of Yale, Avon, was remanded in custody.

#### Strike ballot

The Fire Brigades Union is to ballot its 2,000 members in Manchester for strike action in a dispute over spending cuts which, it claims, will weaken emergency cover and lead to the loss of 36 jobs.

#### Butler jury fails

A jury failed to reach a verdict over a butler, Dennis Tyler, 63, accused of indecently assaulting his employer, Cicely Lancaster, 97, at Kelmahall Hall, Northamptonshire. A retrial is being considered.

#### Spa runs dry

Taps at the pump rooms in Leamington Spa have been turned off after vandals damaged pipework carrying the mineral water from underground springs. Repairs are expected to take two months.

## Learner, 17, tried to blame victim for death crash

BY SHIRLEY ENGLISH

A TEENAGE learner driver was jailed for 18 months yesterday after trying to escape blame for a car crash in which his best friend died by claiming the dead youth was at the wheel.

David Paterson, 17, from Dunblane, Stirling, asked two surviving passengers to lie to police and to say that Nicholas Brown, 17, had been driving when the car hit a verge and spun out of control on a narrow country road. However, his plan to avoid prosecution failed when he owned up under police questioning. Paterson, an unemployed

garage mechanic, was a learner driver when he took his three friends for a spin in his 11-year-old Toyota Starlet in August last year. He had owned the car for three weeks.

The car hit a verge at speed, flipped over three times and skidded on its roof. Nicholas, who was in the front seat and was not wearing a seat belt, was thrown through the windscreen.

After the crash the survivors scrambled from the wreckage and Paterson tried to revive his friend by giving him the kiss of life. Moments later he asked Brian McFarlane, 17,

and Steven Nairn, 18, to lie to police and say the dead youth had been driving.

Paterson was found guilty by jury a last month of driving the car dangerously at excessive speeds and causing the death of Nicholas, a graduate of nautical college. He also admitted driving a car that was not roadworthy, driving without insurance, an MoT certificate and on a provisional licence without L-plates. He was appearing for sentence yesterday at Stirling Sheriff Court. Six months of the sentence was for attempting to pervert the course of justice.

## Service at grave of wreck victims

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A CEREMONY yesterday commemorated what is thought to be a mass grave of black victims of a shipwreck 200 years ago. It is not clear whether those lying beneath the sands at Rapparee Cove, Ilfracombe, Devon, were slaves or prisoners of war being carried aboard the lost barque London.

More than 200 members of the Africa Reparations Movement, led by its founder, Bernie Grant, MP for Tottenham, attended the ceremony. "It brings to the fore the fact that Britain was involved in the slave trade," and ARM

wants Britain to apologise and pay compensation. Mr Grant said: "Supporters, in ethnic dress, beat drums, held prayers and observed three minutes' silence."

Pat Barrow, 48, an amateur archaeologist, found bones, teeth and a set of shackles he claimed came from prisoners aboard the 300-ton vessel, which sank en route from St Lucia, West Indies, to Bristol, in 1796. Mr Barrow said that records showed that the bones were those of African prisoners of war, but tests are now being carried out to find if they are African or European.

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# Blair's choice to succeed Butler salutes tradition

By Valerie Elliott, Whitehall Editor

TONY BLAIR has chosen the candidate backed by the mandarins to succeed Sir Robin Butler, next January, as Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service.

The appointment of Sir Richard Wilson, currently Permanent Secretary at the Home Office, yesterday delighted officials, who saw him as a traditional public servant who would defend their interests. One Whitehall source said: "He is a natural fit for the job."

Last night, Sir Richard was on his way to Arizona for a holiday with his 13-year-old son Tom. They are both avid Westerns fans and are looking forward to visiting the canyon lands and Monument Valley.

Sir Richard, 54, and his wife Caroline recently celebrated their silver wedding anniversary. Lady Wilson, whose father Sir Frank Lee was a Treasury Permanent Secretary, teaches at a school near their home in the country. The couple also have a daughter, Amy, 16.

Sir Richard enjoys country life and gardening. The son of a solicitor who became secretary of the Church in Wales, he spent his early years in Newport, Monmouthshire and moved to the village of Llanarnam, near Cwmbran.

He attended Radley College and won an exhibition to study law at Clare College, Cambridge. He was called to

the Bar in 1966 and joined the former Board of Trade as an assistant principal 31 years ago. He held senior posts at the Treasury and the Cabinet Office before becoming Permanent Secretary at Environment and arriving at the Home Office in 1994.

The then Home Secretary, Michael Howard, had personally requested that Sir Richard be brought in as Permanent Secretary; he did not want a long-standing Home Office official in the job. Mr Howard had to take his case to No 10; John Major eventually ruled in favour of Sir Richard.

It had been thought that the new Labour Government might prefer a less orthodox appointment. In opposition the Labour leadership seriously considered splitting the role of Cabinet Secretary and that of the Head of the Home Civil Service.

The Prime Minister was still taking views in the middle of this week, and Sir Robin told his senior colleagues at the weekly meeting of permanent secretaries on Wednesday that he hoped a decision would be made before the weekend.

Mr Blair was impressed with Sir Richard, describing him to friends as "a dynamic character". After a lengthy interview with Mr Blair a week ago, Sir Richard was offered the job by the Prime Minister on Thursday.

Mr Blair paid tribute to Sir

Richard yesterday, saying he was "an outstanding civil servant."

"I will be looking to him to implement our plans for a simple government, in which the machinery of government works more effectively for the benefit of the people. He will be making sure we make greater use of new technology, both to serve the people and for more effective communication between departments."

It is understood that Andrew Turnbull, the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, was the other strong contender.

A Downing Street source last night said Mr Blair had decided against separating the roles of Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service because they complemented each other and "add authority, weight and insight to the occupant in both capacities."

One Permanent Secretary said last night: "Richard Wilson deserved this. He is very, very good, widely experienced and it was right that he was rewarded for putting up with the antics of Michael Howard in the last few years."

Another senior Whitehall source confirmed that Sir Richard had had frequent rows with Mr Howard. He did not enjoy the period of the contentious sacking of Derek Lewis as head of the Prison Service.

Sir Richard was close to Margaret Thatcher when she was Prime Minister. He was in charge of the economic secretariat at the Cabinet office and was closely associated with her economic reforms.

As one official put it: "He can shimmer without stain. It is exactly right that he can move effortlessly from one administration to another. He is the incarnation of the old public service ideal."

Sir Richard is known for his ability to give frank advice without offending and is loyal to staff, whom he "treats as human beings, not as man units". He is liked for his openness and humour and respected for his intellect.



MPs paired: Andrew Mackay, 47, Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary and member for Bracknell, and Julie Kirkbride, 37, the Tories' Bromsgrove representative, arriving yesterday for a service of blessing in the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft at the House of Commons, after their marriage at a London register office

# Commons powerless to punish former MPs

By Polly Newton, Political Reporter

THREE Tory MPs who were criticised following an inquiry into cash-for-questions allegations would have been recommended for suspension from the Commons if they still had their seats, the Standards and Privileges Committee said yesterday. It conceded that it was now powerless to take action.

All were censured by Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, in his report last month. The committee said that it would have recommended a period of suspension for Michael Brown, Sir Michael Gyllis and Tim Smith, and would also have considered recommending a period of suspension for Sir Andrew Bowden.

Members made clear that they were uneasy about the limitation on their powers to punish former MPs: "In a future report, we shall offer advice to the House on appropriate penalties and sanctions for members and former members involved in unacceptable behaviour."

The committee faces a much tougher test in the fifth and most controversial case dealt with by Sir Gordon in his report - that of Neil Hamilton. Sir Gordon found "compelling" evidence that Mr Hamilton received cash payments from Mohamed Al Fayed, the chairman of Harrods, in return for lobbying services.

But the former Trade Minister, who lost his Tatten seat to the former BBC correspondent Martin Bell on May 1, has vehemently denied any wrongdoing and branded Sir Gordon's report "a miscarriage of justice".

Although the Commons rose for its 13-week summer break on Thursday, the committee will meet again on Tuesday to discuss Mr Hamilton. A full public apology by Tim Smith, the former MP for Beaconsfield, and his admission of a substantial part of the allegations against him, were

acknowledged by the committee in its report yesterday.

Mr Smith was found by Sir Gordon to have accepted up to £25,000 in cash payments from Mr Al Fayed in return for lobbying services. But members rejected Mr Smith's query about whether he was being fairly judged, given the standards prevailing in the mid-1980s. His concealment of payments to press for action by ministers would have been a clear contempt of the House at any time since a House decision of 1941, it concluded.

It reached a similar conclusion about Sir Andrew Bowden, who was found by Sir Gordon to have failed to register a donation of £5,319 towards his election expenses from the lobbyist Ian Greer. Sir Gordon concluded that the payment was intended as a reward for lobbying and Sir Andrew - former MP for Brighton Kemptown - "probably knew it came originally from Mr Al Fayed".

The committee accepted Sir Gordon's findings that Sir Michael Gyllis deliberately misled the Select Committee on Members' Interests in 1990 by "seriously understating" the number of commission payments he had received from lobbyists in return for introducing clients to ministers. However, the committee did not accept Sir Gordon's finding that "Sir Michael's action in taking a commission payment for introducing a constituent to Mr Greer was unacceptable".

It said: "This was not against the rules. However, we believe such a payment to be wholly inappropriate."

Sir Michael stood down from his Surrey North West seat at the election. The admission by Michael Brown, former MP for Cleethorpes, that he made an error of judgment in failing to register certain interests is acknowledged, as is his apology to the former standards and privileges committee.



Sir Richard Wilson, appointed Cabinet Secretary

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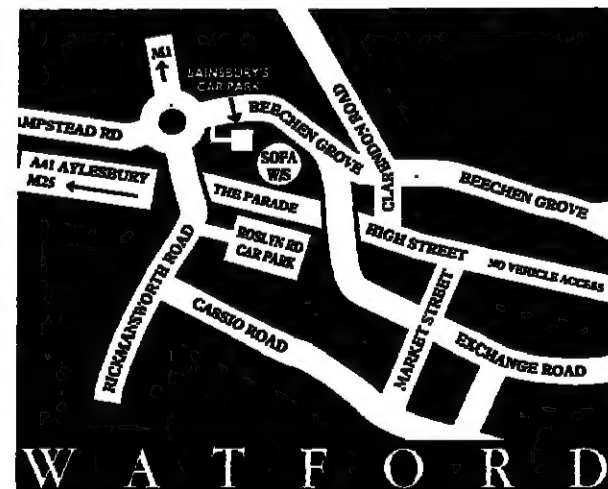
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# Faslane peace camp prepares for battle



Simon and friends take to the trees to resist efforts to evict them. "We are not going anywhere," he said

Gillian Bowditch visits 'the Ritz' as protesters act to make impending eviction more trouble than it's worth

ANTI-NUCLEAR protesters at Britain's oldest peace camp are adopting tactics used in the Manchester airport siege to try to fend off their imminent eviction. The site, opposite the Faslane submarine base on the Clyde, is regarded as the Ritz of peace camps: it has running water, two flushing toilets, a bath, a windmill generating power and its own postcode.

Established on June 12, 1982, the camp currently has around 40 multinational protesters living in a cluster of garishly painted caravans, benders and tents. The oldest residents are in their 50s and the youngest, Jake, is 3½.

At the height of the Thatcher era the camp was supported by Strathclyde Regional Council and Dumbarton District Council, which both declared themselves nuclear-free zones. It was granted legal status and protesters paid rent of £1 a month for the 100-yard strip of grass verge on which it is sited. Initially, planning per-

mission was granted annually, then five-yearly and, eventually, indefinitely.

Now Argyll and Bute District Council, an independent local authority, has served a notice to quit on the protesters. Under its terms the camp should have been cleared by midnight on Monday. The council has been authorised to take "all necessary steps" to clear the camp and is planning court action to enforce the notice. A spokesman said there had been complaints from local people, although the protesters insist they have a lot of support.

For the time being, all is peaceful, although police patrols have been stepped up. The protesters are optimistic that the council will decide the eviction is too expensive and bad for its image and quietly drop the whole process.

To this end they are digging tunnels, building walkways in the trees and pouring concrete mixed with rubber into all



A protester called Danny at the mouth of a tunnel. The campaigners also plan to chain themselves to concrete

chain themselves in the event of a forced eviction: the rubber is to make the drills bounce around. The slogan "When freedom is outlawed only outlaws are free" has been carved on a piece of wood.

While the council is taking stock of the situation, a number of councillors are keen to press ahead with the closure of what they regard as an eye-

sore. If they are successful, it will represent the end of an era. The Faslane camp is one of only two permanent sites in the country (the other is a women's camp at the American communications base at Menwith Hill, North Yorkshire) and is the only one to be legally recognised by a local authority. It boasts an office with a battered copy of *Jane's*

*Fighting Ships*; it has a telephone and the birchen, postman and milkman make regular calls.

However, conditions are far from luxurious. The site is muddy and squalid and all the equipment is on its last legs. Even so, the residents are determined to stay. Simon, a twenty-something newcomer with part-long, part-shorn hair, several nose rings and

flawless long purple finger-nails, said: "We are not going anywhere. We will physically resist eviction. There are lots of people who will join us when the eviction starts."

"We still have to put the finishing touches to some of the tunnels and lock-ins, but we are already in a position where we can resist for long enough to make the eviction very expensive."

Maria Masone, a veteran of peace camps around the world, said the protesters wanted to give the council a chance to back down. "There is only one camp rule, no violence. Any protest will be 100 per cent non-violent."

The irony of surviving the Thatcher era only to be pushed out in the reign of new Labour is not lost on her. "There doesn't seem to be a lot of tolerance with this new Government," she said. "Obviously we have to wait and see, but Tony Blair seems to want to control everything. It is almost a sort of social engineering. Everyone here has a strict moral code about

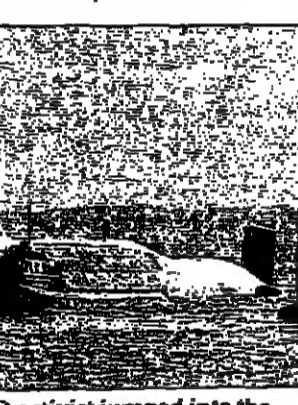
how they relate to society, but by marshalling people into work programmes and refusing them benefits if they don't conform they have become intolerant of that wonderful flexibility on the margins of society where people develop alternative lifestyles."

A woman called M, who has spent three years on and off at the camp, explained its role. "We keep an eye on all the comings and goings at the naval base. We call it the Nuke Watch. There is a log book

going back 15 years which is kept up by whoever is here."

Jim Chestnut, 45, who, with Jane Tallents, vice-chair of Scottish CND, was one of the earliest protesters at the camp, said: "The danger is not that some madman will press a button and start a nuclear war. The danger is that these submarines are getting old. They are situated in a built-up area. There could be an accident. It is a vital job. Maybe the new Labour Government should sponsor us."

In a protest in 1992, a CND activist jumped into the Clyde in the path of the submarine HMS Vanguard



In a protest in 1992, a CND activist jumped into the Clyde in the path of the submarine HMS Vanguard

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Gregory and John McNamara



IT WAS 30 YEARS AGO TODAY (MORE OR LESS): DOMINIC KENNEDY CELEBRATES A RETURN TO THE DAYS OF CRYPTIC ROCK ALBUM COVERS

## Parents hold key as Oasis play the generation game

THE biggest guessing game in rock music for a generation has been launched by Oasis, whose new album, *Definitely Not Be Here Now*, features a sleeve design packed with riddles and obscure symbolism redolent of The Beatles' *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

Fans are pestered by their parents for memories of the debate provoked by the elaborate *Sgt Pepper* cover, issued on June 1 1967 and peppered with imagery widely interpreted as clues that Paul McCartney was dead.

The parallels become acute when one learns that Oasis recorded part of *Definitely Not Be Here Now* in the same No 2 studio in Abbey Road, London, which The Beatles used for their 1967 album, released three days after the songwriter Noel Gallagher's birth. On the cover of *Sgt Pepper* a toy car can be seen on a zebra crossing. The Beatles echoed the imagery on the cover of *Abbey Road* in 1969 and, for some fans, perpetuated the myth that Paul was dead by picturing him in black, bare-



Sgt Pepper: the album that had fans guessing

foot and out of step on the crossing near the studio in Abbey Road. In the background can be seen a police van with the registration number SYO 724F. And guess where that registration crops up again? On the number plate of a Rolls Royce on the new Oasis cover.

"I am glad," said John Harris, Editor of *Select* magazine. "We are back to the halcyon days of cryptic album covers that will make a conspiracy theorist's life an absolute joy. The Internet is

throbbing with this stuff."

Even the simplest of clues on the cover of *Definitely Not Be Here Now* is capable of multiple interpretations. Mr Aizlewood explained that a car in the swimming pool was clearly a reference to Keith Moon, The Who's late "wildman" drummer who was in the habit of parking Rolls Royces in pools. Keith Moon used to go to parties at Stocks Hotel Golf and Country Club, where photographs for the album cover were taken.

In the background of *Definitely Not Be Here Now*, Noel Gallagher looks through a telescope, as did Ringo Starr in the film *Magical Mystery Tour*. The parking meter refers to *Lovely Rita*, Meter Maid, the traffic warden's anthem on *Sgt Pepper*, while the wind-up gramophone is the logo of Parlophone, The Beatles' old record label.

Among other famously obscure album covers, The Small Faces' *Ogdan's Nut Gone Flake* in 1968 opened to show a picture of a tobacco tin with rolling paper that said "Sus" on it. That showed that the box

was suspect, because the album name referred to their favourite tobacco for mixing cannabis joints.

In a corner of the cover of the 1972 album *Sailin' Shoes*, by Little Feat, Mick Jagger is pictured dressed as Gainsborough's Blue Boy, for no obvious reason. The LP also shows a cake on a swing being approached by a giant snail.

One mystery which nobody has solved is the choice of the date, Thursday August 21 on the calendar on the front of *Definitely Not Be Here Now*. It is the release day of the album, an oddity in itself because most records arrive in the shops on a Monday, and so has been deemed to have great symbolic importance.

August 21 was the date when Sting married his girlfriend in London in 1992, but that seems an unlikely allusion. The most significant event for the Gallagher brothers on August 21 was in 1988, when Britain's licensing laws were liberalised. "That must be it," said Mr Harris. "They hate Sting."



Echoes of yesterday: the new Oasis album is a goldmine of obscure imagery. The meaning of the numberplate on the scooter, a Mod icon, remains a mystery.

## Judges back U2

THE Irish rock group, U2 yesterday won a legal battle to stage two concerts for 80,000 fans in Dublin's Lansdowne Road rugby ground on August 30 and 31. The Irish Supreme Court overturned a decision by the city's High Court, which had backed local residents who said planning permission was needed.

## Charity sell-out

All 4,500 tickets for a concert in aid of Mount Meru sold within 90 minutes yesterday. They went on sale just as the Caribbean island's Soufriere volcano, which in two years has killed 20 people and uprooted thousands, erupted again. The Albert Hall concert on September 15 includes Elton John, Eric Clapton and Sting.

## Roman site 'was a prison camp for Britons'

By Robin Young

BRITONS may have been prisoners in one of the first concentration camps, as well as being the inventors of the modern version.

It has been accepted that the British devised the camps in South Africa during the Boer War. Now it appears that Ancient Britons may have been incarcerated in something similar after fighting the Romans 18 centuries earlier.

Archaeologists have long puzzled over who were the original inhabitants of circular buildings at Vindolanda fort on Hadrian's Wall, which were first discovered in 1931 by Professor Eric Birley. His son Robin, director of the Vindolanda Trust, near Haltwhistle, Northumberland, said yesterday: "No other Roman fort has circular buildings like these. We have discovered the whole of the 2nd-century fort was flattened for these huts and a new garrison."

Mr Birley thinks there could have been up to 200 huts, built back-to-back in rows of five and holding up to 1,000 people. He said: "We know that the Romans were putting down a native rebellion in Scotland between Edinburgh and Aberdeen from 208 to 211. It appears they took hostages from the defeated tribes. If these had just been male prisoners they would have been kept in barracks, but each hut is big enough for a family. They are very similar to native huts — about six metres in diameter. They had ovens and hearths which suggest they held family groups."

Also, they had stone foundations and floors, probably built by the Romans, and would have had wattle-and-rail walls built by the natives.

"They may have been here only six months before the huts were destroyed and the new fort built on top. We assume the people were sent home."

Diggers found no evidence of pottery or jewellery associated with Roman life around the buildings. Soil sample analysis is still awaited.

## Hotelier catches a crab over recipe for local soup

By A Staff Reporter

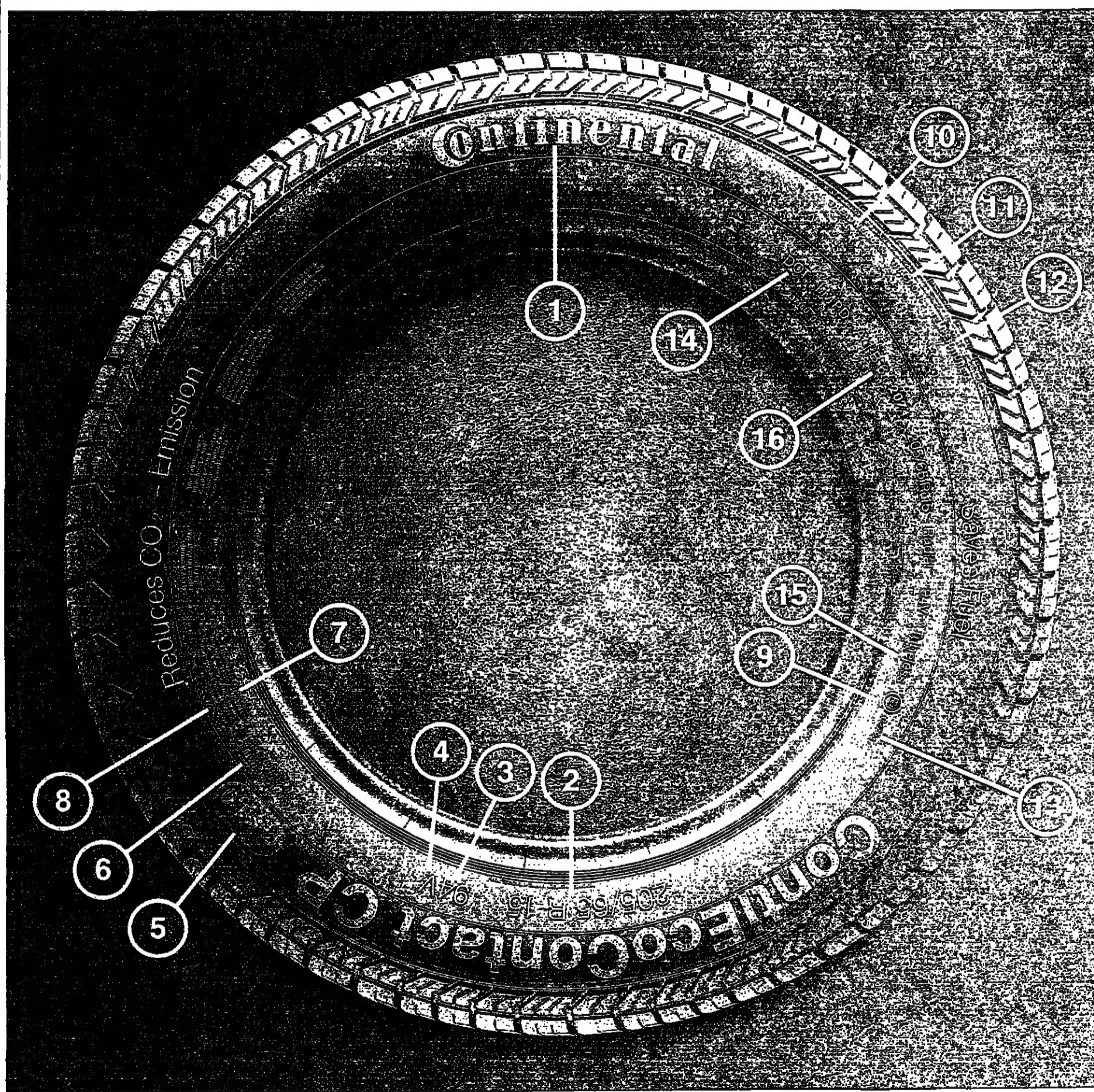
A HOTELIER was fined £100 yesterday for polluting her Cornish crab soup with foreign bodies — Norwegian crabs. Majorie Ross, 79, the owner of the Port Gaverne Hotel, near Port Isaac, was ordered to pay £220 costs after admitting displaying a label which was likely to mislead.

"The only thing Cornish about the soup was that the tin was in Cornwall when it was opened and the soup was exposed to the local air for a fleeting moment," Roger Tregidga, for the prosecution, told magistrates at Bodmin. Trading standards officers visited the 17-bedroom hotel after a holidaymaker, Jacqueline Pool, thought the taste of the £2.95 dish was a little too "cosmopolitan" for her liking.

When she walked past a cupboard at the hotel she saw row upon row of tins labelled "Lusty Crab Bisque". When she later complained to Trading Standards officers they went to the hotel and a sample was sent away to the Public Analyst — who discovered the crab was from Norway.

Michael Hartley, for the defence, said the company that supplied the crabs had changed hands and Mrs Ross believed it was still supplying her with Cornish crabs. "Over the years she has served thousands of gallons and has received many compliments from patrons. The hotel has a very high reputation nationally," he added.

Mrs Ross said later: "Everyone thought the soup was excellent. Several asked for the recipe."



## ONE DAY YOU MAY MEET A GERMAN TYRE ENGINEER AT A PARTY. BE PREPARED.

A German tyre engineer's small talk tends to be very small indeed.

After all, if you spend your entire life thinking about the finer points of tyre design — as all Continental's tyre engineers do — then the weather, the sausage rolls or your holiday plans hold little interest compared with wear patterns, sidewalls and aquaplaning tests.

So, if you meet one at a party, the only way to avoid finding out more than you might want to know about tyre construction is to have all the necessary tyre knowledge at your fingertips: so you can give as good as you get.

1. Manufacturer's logo. When choosing tyres, always look for the Continental logo.

2. Tyre size. 205 = width in mm. 65 = ratio of height to width (in this case, 65% of 205mm). R = radial. 15 = rim diameter in inches.

3. A code representing the maximum load carrying capacity. In this case, 94 represents 670kgs.

4. Speed rating. For cars, this ranges from 'S' to 'Z' — the higher the letter, the greater the speed capability. 'V' means this tyre is capable of sustained speeds up to 150mph. Please just take our word for it.

5. Coefficient of Rolling Resistance. This is the rolling resistance of the tyre expressed as a percentage of wheel load. In plain English, the lower the rolling resistance of the tyre, the lower your fuel consumption. A figure of

1.0 or less is every tyre engineer's aim.

6. USA law requires the maximum load rating per wheel to be shown.

7. More construction details — music to a Continental tyre engineer's ears. Under the tread of this tyre there are 5 plies (belts): 1 rayon, 2 steel, 2 nylon.

8. The maximum inflation pressure. USA law requires this to be shown.

9. E = tyre complies with nominal values to ECE standard R30. (A Good Thing.)

10/11/12. Manufacturer's guarantee that the tyre meets USA requirements for tread life expectancy, braking performance and temperature stability at higher speeds.

13. Approval number to ECE standard R30 for this tyre. (See: we told you it was a good thing.)

14. The Department of Transportation overseas tyre safety standards in the USA. (Or 'tire' safety as they call it.)

15. Tyre construction type. This tyre, like all modern tyres, is tubeless.

16. Manufacturer's code for tyre factory, size, type and week and year of manufacture. Our engineers would like to autograph all their work, but we have to draw the line somewhere.

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# Choice of candidate 'cost us victory'

Labour activists in Uxbridge say selection procedure handed Tories victory, reports Polly Newton

LABOUR was accused from within its own ranks yesterday of throwing away victory in the Uxbridge by-election because of its choice of candidate.

The attack on the party's selection procedure came as William Hague, the Conservative leader, visited Uxbridge to congratulate local Tory activists on their success. John Randall won with a majority of 3,766, an increase of more than 3,000 on the 724 margin of the late Sir Michael Shersby on May 1.

But as the Tories were enjoying the aftermath of their first by-election victory since Mr Hague won the North

Yorkshire seat of Richmond in 1989, the Labour leadership was under fire for, in effect, imposing a candidate on the local party.

The National Executive Committee drew up a shortlist for the seat which excluded David Williams, who stood for Labour in Uxbridge at the general election. Andrew Slaughter, the leader of Hammersmith and Fulham council, was selected by the local party from the shortlist.

Peter James, chairman of the Labour group on Hillingdon council — which covers Uxbridge — said: "Far from the Tories winning this election, I think the Labour Party did a very good job at losing this election."

He said Mr Williams, the leader of the council, should have been the Labour candidate. "I am convinced that if he had been standing, we would have been waking up this morning with a Labour MP."

Mr Williams himself said he was not sure whether he would have won. But he acknowledged that he had heard on the doorsteps that people would have voted for him had he been Labour's choice.

"It was always going to be an uphill struggle and, if it had been the candidate, the



Tory first supporters at The Turning Point pub in Uxbridge salute John Randall and William Hague as they celebrate the party's first by-election victory since 1989

## HOW THEY VOTED

John Randall (C)	18,288
Andrew Slaughter (Lab)	12,622
Keith Kerr (Lib Dem)	1,792
Lord Sutcliffe (Haring Loony)	396
Tory majority	3,766
Total vote	31,867
Turnout	55%

Ken Anderson (National Democrat): 157; Ronnie Carroll (Emerald Rain-bow Islands Dream Ticket Party): 30; James Felsenberger (UKIP): 28; Julia Leonard (Socialist Party): 259; John McCauley (National Front): 110; Henry Middleton (Original Liberal Party): 69; Francis Taylor (British National Party): 205.

Gen election: Sir Michael Shersby (C) 18,095; D Williams (Lab) 17,371; A Maynard (Lib) 4,528; G Ald (Lib) 1,155; J Leonard (Gen) 396. C majority 724.

position would have been that he was not sure whether he would have won. But he acknowledged that he had heard on the doorsteps that people would have voted for him had he been Labour's choice.

"It was always going to be an uphill struggle and, if it had been the candidate, the

had operated the same procedure for selection of candidates in by-elections for a decade. "Those procedures have served us well," he said.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, also defended Mr Slaughter's selection. "We knew we lost some terrible by-elections when constituency parties selected them, because

special pressures do come on people in by-elections," he said. The procedure had been agreed by the party and was used for every by-election.

He added: "It is true that the Tories made a great deal of this local candidate and it was one of the factors in the election."

Lord Parkinson, the Conser-

vative Party chairman, said the result reflected Labour's "arrogance" in ditching Mr Williams. "There was just this unease that was creeping into the minds of local people. These people think they own the country and it is time we told them that they had better be a shade less arrogant," he said. "If we had lost people

would have said this is really the beginning of the end. Now people see that there are a substantial number of Conservatives who didn't vote for us at the general election for one reason or another and are beginning to come back to us," he told the Radio 4 Today programme.

Nick Harvey, the Liberal

Democrats' campaign manager, said voters had seen the by-election as a two-horse race. "I think Labour will have learnt a lesson in that parachuting a candidate from outside was taken by local people as a bit of a slap in the face for the local community."

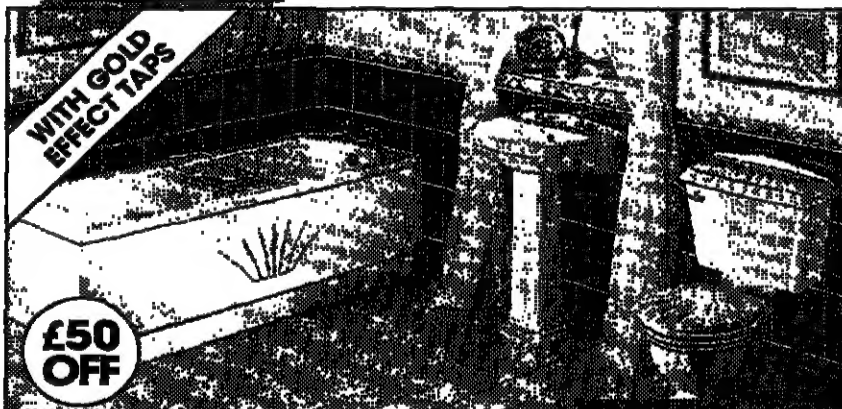
Leading article, page 19

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Yvette Cooper, 28, is one of four newcomers on the "ring of secrecy" committee, chaired by Tom King

## Blair selects young guard for defence of the realm

Michael Evans on new members of the parliamentary security committee

ONE of the youngest new Labour MPs to join the "elder statesmen" of the Parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee, which monitors MI6, MI5 and GCHQ.

Yvette Cooper, 28, a former journalist, was selected by Tony Blair for the so-called "ring of secrecy" committee which previously had an average age of 63. By tradition it consisted of experienced parliamentarians, many with ministerial knowledge of the intelligence services.

The Prime Minister has also chosen for the committee Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale, who was an MI6 intelligence officer from 1969 to 1991. Baroness Ramsay, 61, served in Stockholm, Helsinki and MI6 headquarters in London. The committee will remain under the chairmanship of the Conservative MP Tom King, former Northern Ireland Secretary and Defence Secretary.

Ms Cooper is 22 years younger than the next youngest committee member, newly appointed Kevin Barron, Labour MP for Rother Valley. She was an economic columnist and leader writer at *The Independent* before she was elected in May and is engaged to be married to Ed Balls, personal adviser to Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Her work with the committee will mean access to the most secret material. One Westminster source said: "There are things which she will not be allowed to discuss with her fiancé, and presumably things he will not be able to discuss with her." Former colleagues described her as "frighteningly controlled" and discreet.

Ms Cooper, who gained a 25.725 majority in Pontefract and Castleford, was an economic researcher for the late John Smith while he was

Opposition leader and was a policy adviser to President Clinton's election campaign in 1992. She lists her recreations as swimming, painting and watching soap operas.

The fourth new member of the nine-strong committee is Dale Campbell-Savours, 53, Labour MP for Workington.

Mr King said he had wanted members with penetrating minds. It was not the job of the committee to "snuggle up" to the intelligence services but to ask pertinent questions on behalf of Parliament and the public.

The new members will be allowed to see all the classified papers that were made available to the previous committee, appointed under the Conservative Government. Those with no experience of the intelligence services would be expected to "catch up" with the background secret material during the summer recess, he said, but would not be allowed to take the documents home. "They will have to read them at the Cabinet Office," Mr King said.

He plans to summon the heads of MI5, MI6 and GCHQ, the electronic eavesdropping centre, to appear before the new committee, which will have its first meeting in October. The other members are Alan Beith, Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman, Barry Jones, Labour MP for Alyn and Deeside, Michael Mates, former Tory Northern Ireland Minister, and Allan Rogers, Labour MP for Rhondda. The meetings are always held in camera.

One of the principal concerns of the committee has been the potential for security leaks and foreign penetration of the intelligence agencies. This follows the discovery of Russian-controlled spies in the CIA and FBI.

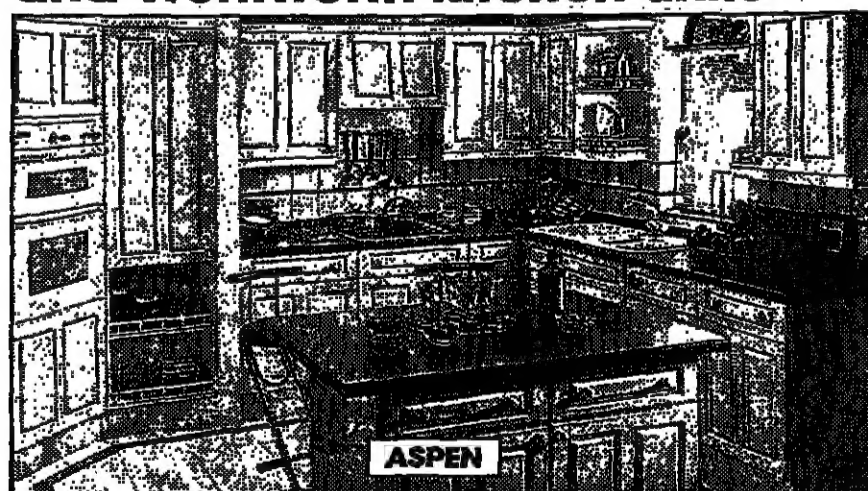
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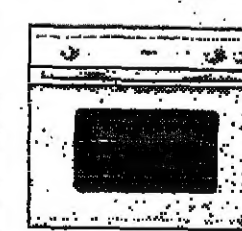
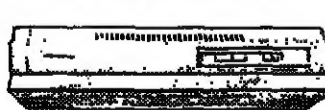
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Gregory and John McNamara

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# Couples should undergo trial marriage, says cleric

Ruth Gledhill on a call to revive the medieval practice of living together before making a lifelong commitment

COUPLES who want to marry should have a formal church blessing allowing them to live together first to "test their vocations" to each other, according to a leading Anglican theologian.

The Rev Beaumont Stevenson, a clergyman in the Oxford diocese, says the Church should bless formal betrothals, as it did in the Middle Ages. This would allow couples to find out about each other before they make a vow of lifelong commitment to each other.

In a paper submitted to the Church Times, Dr Stevenson calls for liturgists who are revisiting the marriage service for the millennium to return to the traditional "two-step procedure" of church weddings.

His proposal comes a week after government statistics showed that few people attach any importance to remaining chaste until marriage and that more than four in ten couples who choose a white wedding are already living together.

Dr Stevenson, former chaplain of Keble College, Oxford, and pastoral care adviser to

the Bishop of Oxford, the Right Rev Richard Harries, says that for several hundred years, the Church has failed to take marriage seriously.

"On the one hand, it extols marriage as the highest state in which sexuality can be expressed, while on the other it has made entry into the married state so lax and automatic that virtually anyone living within a parish who applies to be married can do so," he says.

In this respect, marriage differs from other church practices. "Someone wishing to become ordained or to enter a religious community goes through a discernment process: where they test their vocation to that state," says Dr Stevenson.

The Church once had a similar procedure for marriage, but dropped it after the Reformation. In the Middle Ages, it was imperative to know if a marriage would work because no divorce was allowed, and also in order to discover if a bride could become pregnant.

The couple would participate in a service of betrothal at the church door, where they were asked if they would take this man or woman to be their lawful wedded husband or wife "to have and to hold from this day forward".

They then set up home together and, when it became clear the marriage would work, would return to church for the final vows at the chancel steps, and then proceed to the high altar for the Eucharist.

In many paintings of French weddings, the bride is radiant for the final vows of her marriage by being nicely pregnant," Dr Stevenson says. But he notes the process was open to abuse. Chaucer's Wife of Bath married five times at the church door, without fulfilling her vows.

In some countries, such as Scandinavia and Scotland, where sexual relations were prohibited outside marriage, engaged couples were allowed

to sleep in the same beds but were sewn up in different sleeping bags in a custom known as "bundling".

The medieval practices died out in England after the Reformation, when married clergy were allowed for the first time. Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753, which defined marriage by law for the first time, further formalised the situation, bringing an end to secular practices such as marking a marriage by jumping over a broom together in front of witnesses.

The betrothal service did not disappear but was tacked on to the beginning of the marriage service. Not only has this debased marriage, but clergy

are now powerless to stop any marriage they feel might not work out, Dr Stevenson says.

"There is no time set aside for discernment or working towards a married state," he says. "The couple are expected to make an infallible choice of partner for life based on a time when they may be so romantically in love with each other that they have no idea how life would be together when the hormonal narcotic wears off."

Dr Stevenson, 57, who is also a psychotherapist and teaches counselling at Oxford Brookes University, is not married and does not live with anyone, but says if he did wish to marry he would first set up home with his future wife.

He is proposing that the Church should separate the two services again. "People could come to church as much as six months or a year ahead and do a formal betrothal. They could then, when they felt ready, go forward to the married state once they had suitably tested their vocation with arrangements set up for reflection along the way."

He says the service could be open to any couple who wished to have their relationship blessed by the Church, including gay and lesbian couples.

Leading article, page 19  
Marriage exams, Weekend, page 1  
At your service, Weekend, page 11



The Wife of Bath: Chaucer's character took advantage of the medieval practice of living together while betrothed: "housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyve"

## Credo

### Why we may need to do less for God

Nigel McCulloch

YEARS ago, when our younger daughter Liz was small, she suffered from St Vitus's dance. Known medically as Sydenham's chorea, this now rare condition manifests itself chiefly in being unable to keep still.

The link between the illness and St Vitus is obscure. Possibly a 4th-century Sicilian martyr during the persecution of the Roman emperor Diocletian, Vitus is said to have been boiled in oil together with his old nurse. Subsequently associated with various bodily ills, his name became synonymous with the almost convulsive symptoms of agitated movement which I remember so anxiously observing in my daughter.

Thankfully, Liz has long since made a full recovery. But our society seems itself to have developed a condition similar to that which she once suffered, namely, the inability to be still.

The ceaseless round of activity, and consequent stress, which so characterises life today may well be a significant reason why, for many people, God appears to have little or no acknowledged significance in what they are or do. That is hardly surprising. The style of living in much of current society militates against any inclination to be reflective. Indeed, much of what we are about seems to be diametrically opposed to the divine command echoed so memorably in Psalm 46: "Be still and know that I am God."

Nor, alas, is the Church immune from this lack of stillness. For example, the present Decade of Evangelism led, especially at first, to a plethora of extra activities. Clergy and their parishes found themselves under an often unbearable pressure to do more.

The astute observation of St Vincent de Paul in the 17th century remains cannily apposite: "It is a trick of the Devil, which he employs to

deceive good souls, to incite them to do more than they are able, in order that they may no longer be able to do anything." Mounting extra events is invariably the antithesis of what is required to bring people closer to an experience of God.

In the history of the Christian Church, there have always been those who have seen it as their vocation to draw apart and wait quietly upon God. For example, St Antony of Egypt, the founder of monasticism (on whose feast day I was born and whose life of extended self-discipline and solitude has long intrigued me), spent most of his time praying, studying and doing such manual work as was necessary to earn his living. He came to know God through the stillness.

Others have spoken of the



addictive dangers of noise and busyness — and how these can block our path to God. Whittier's popular hymn, *Dear Lord and Father of mankind*, puts the point memorably. Itself written about addiction, the hymn asks that God may drop His still dew of quietness till all our strivings cease; and that He may replace our strains and stresses with ordered lives — and the beauty of His peace.

An earlier and less familiar verse refers tellingly to a

problem which is at the root of our own modern spiritual malaise. It mentions "Our words and works that drown / The tender whisper of Thy call". Recognition that our words and works, well intentioned though they may be, do often drown His call is crucial to the reawakening and deepening of spirituality that is needed both corporately and individually throughout the Church today.

All too often — and I suspect this is true for most of us on the Christian way — busyness relentlessly takes over. Without recognising the symptoms, we become infected by the disease of activism.

One of my top priorities as bishop is to put time aside to see each one of my parish priests every year — personally to keep in touch and to listen to how things are. In these valuable times together, I recognise in many of them the tensions which so often I face within myself — about getting the balance right between necessary stillness with God and necessary pastoral activity among His people.

Michael Ramsey, former Archbishop of Canterbury, remarked 30 years ago that there was little enough, amidst the noise even of that time, of the quiet waiting upon God which is at the heart of our religion. He quoted the 13th-century St Dominic's great description of the Christian way. "*Contemplare et contemplata alii tradere*" — to contemplate and to pass on to others the things contemplated. And he asked a question even more tellingly pertinent today. Is our weakness in the second due to our being often too busy for the first?

The Right Rev Nigel McCulloch is Bishop of Wakefield and chairman of the Church of England's Mission, Evangelism and Renewal Committee.

## Lloyds TSB Group results for the first half of 1997

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	Half-year to 30 June 1997 (unaudited) £m	Half-year to 30 June 1996 £m	Half-year to 31 December 1996 £m
Profit before tax and write-down of finance leases	1,504	1,130	1,375
Write-down of finance leases	(58)	—	—
Profit before tax	1,446	1,130	1,375
Tax	356	372	414
Profit after tax	1,090	758	961
Minority interests	5	68	76
Profit attributable to shareholders	1,085	690	885
Dividends	283	214	478
Earnings per share	20.4p	13.7p	17.5p
Dividends per share	5.3p	4.2p	9.0p

Financial information for the year ended 31 December 1996 is based on the statutory accounts for 1996 which have been delivered to the registrar of companies. The auditors' report on these accounts was unqualified and did not include a statement under sections 237(2) or (3) of the Companies Act 1985.

The interim dividend of 5.3p per share will be paid on 10 October 1997 to shareholders registered on 15 August 1997. Shareholders who have completed a mandate under the share dividend scheme will receive new shares instead of the cash dividend.

Copies of the news release containing full details of the results may be obtained from Investor Relations, Lloyds TSB Group plc, 71 Lombard Street, London EC3P 3BS (telephone: 0171 356 1273).



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of nerve  
sparks  
Mexican  
stand-off

questions about the preparedness of the city's police. The plot caught them totally unawares, and was foiled only as an apparent stroke of good fortune. There was no evidence yesterday of any additional security on the subway.

**FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM**

**By ROSS DUNN**

Noor said his brother first went to Canada. After taking a course in English, he moved to the United States and recently told his family he was going to marry his American girlfriend.

"My brother . . . used to say that [Americans] are nice people and lovely hospitable people, and he was going to marry one of them. How the can harm them?"

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**FROM IAN BRODIE  
IN WASHINGTON**

**An Israeli soldier blindfolds one of the Palestinians arrested in the West Bank**

**"I don't mind being dubbed aristocratic. I think it's quite funny – and it's helped me a lot . . ."**  
JASMINE GUINNESS – THE LATEST ARISTO-MODEL

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**Gregory and John McManus**

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Faulkner: a private man who did not encourage public tributes from his home town

### Centenary tribute for Faulkner leads to angry exchanges between family and former mayor

FROM BRONWEN MADDOY IN OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI

THE tiny Mississippi town of Oxford hopes to celebrate next month the 100th anniversary of the birth of William Faulkner, its most famous resident, and the man many call the greatest American writer of the 20th century. But a row over his statue, setting the Faulkner family against the former mayor, threatens to scupper the ceremony.

Jimmy Faulkner, 74, nephew of the writer, says the dozen members of the family will not plan an anniversary party until the fate of the statue is decided. If they lose their fight to have it built at Rowan Oak, Faulkner's plantation home, he says: "We'll all stay home."

The row has come as something of an embarrassment to Oxford, given the scale of



Oxford's city hall: Faulkner's family is outraged at proposed site for a statue

international interest in the September 25 centenary. France, where Faulkner is probably most adored outside the United States, is planning to unveil a plaque in the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris. This week a record number of academics and Faulkner fans, many of whom know his page-long sentences by heart, braved Oxford's 113F (45C) heat for the annual conference in his memory. Faulkner, who died in 1962, did not encourage

public tributes from his home town, nor did he receive many. Oxford was ambivalent about his portrait of the decaying South and its hidden violence, racism and incest. So was the University of Mississippi, known as "Ole Miss", which dominates the town, and which has only recently lost its image as a fortress of Southern prejudice.

With Oxford now thriving from 15,000 literary pilgrims a year, its doubts have given

way to possessiveness. The former mayor, John Leslie, an Anglophile who has kited out Oxford's streets with a London double-decker bus and red telephone booth, decided that a fitting memorial was needed. He commissioned a \$30,000 statue (£30,000), half funded by the town, to go up in the City Hall in Oxford's picturesque central square, despite the protests of the Faulkner family, who said the writer, an intensely private

man, would have been outraged.

Public unease grew when it emerged that Mr Leslie, in partnership with Faulkner's doctor, might retain rights to the statue's reproduction and could sell miniatures at a profit. The row exploded when, without planning permission, City Hall crews chopped down the ancient magnolia by the hall's steps to make way for the statue. Concrete was poured for the plinth late on a Friday afternoon, after city officials had gone home. "It was like a male dog at a fire hydrant — he was just determined to leave his mark," one resident remarked this week.

Mr Leslie, whose 24-year reign as mayor ended three weeks ago, says he is "not aware of the statue being an issue" in the recent elections. But his successor, Patricia Lamar, who says Faulkner "makes us proud", believes the row was "the last little thing" that put her in City Hall.

Mrs Lamar has called on the state attorney-general to pronounce on the ownership and location of the statue. For now, it languishes in a foundry in Memphis. That might be the ending Faulkner would have preferred.

## Clinton sex case subpoena angers woman 'victim'

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

LAWYERS for Paula Jones, who claims that she was sexually harassed by President Clinton when he was Governor of Arkansas, have subpoenaed a woman who used to work in the White House. But a lawyer for the woman, Kathleen Willey, said yesterday she was "outraged" to have been pulled into the case, feeling her privacy had been violated.

She did not have any information that would be relevant to Mrs Jones's complaint.

Mrs Willey "had, and continues to have, a very good relationship with the President", said the lawyer, Daniel Gecker, who promised to challenge the subpoena. It requires Mrs Willey to appear in Mr Gecker's office on August 14 to answer questions under oath from Mrs Jones's lawyers for a deposition.

American media accounts said Mrs Willey, who worked in two offices at the White House, would be asked about reports that she rebuffed an improper advance by Mr Clinton in 1993.

Last September Mr Clinton appointed Mrs Willey to the board of the United Service Organisation, which provides

morale-boosting events for the armed forces. She and her husband, Edward, worked in the 1992 Clinton campaign and were in Little Rock on election night. A year later Mr Willey committed suicide while under investigation for alleged embezzlement of \$250,000 (£153,000) from clients.

Lawyers for Mrs Jones said that they were trying to show that Mr Clinton engaged in a pattern of sexually harassing women while he was Governor and also since he became President. Mr Clinton adamantly denies Mrs Jones's claim that he exposed himself to her in a Little Rock hotel room and asked for oral sex.

His lawyer, Robert Bennett, said the subpoena was an effort by Mrs Jones's lawyers to embarrass the President by planting untrue stories in the press. The Supreme Court ruled in May that Mrs Jones's case can proceed while he is in office.

Joseph Cammarata, one of her lawyers, said: "We are now gathering evidence. If he grabbed and groped one, and grabbed and groped another and a third, well it might answer the question about what he did here."

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## PROMS CONCERTS

## This Earth does not move

High expectations were raised by the visit of Mark Wigglesworth and his BBC National Orchestra of Wales to a pair of Proms this week, but not all were met. Perhaps they were unreasonably high: although Wigglesworth has consolidated his position as one of this country's most interesting conductors, he set himself a tough challenge by filling Wednesday and Thursday evenings with a London premiere, a concerto and three very different Earth-inspired symphonies.

Three, that is, like Mahler, you regard *Das Lied von der Erde* as a symphony. In spite of Wigglesworth's Mahlerian credentials, he appeared uncertain of how to shape this symphonic song entity. The earlier songs were beautifully accompanied and full of atmospheric detail, but there was no cohesive link between them, and the long finale was too drawn out even for its evocation of eternity. However, it was worth sitting through for Waltraud Meier's singing, poured out in long lines of shining mezzo tone.

Wigglesworth's soft-edged and autumnal account of Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* was unusual but at least consistent. The measured tempo that made the opening sound so fresh grew wearisome where greater tension was needed, and in the finale they also taxed some of those players expected to sustain unreasonably long phrases.

If only he had brought the same relaxed spaciousness to the opening of Sibelius's *Symphony* the following night. Although the life-and-death struggles of the second movement and the scherzo were

shaped impressively, the finale did not make its full, epic impact. The ruggedness was there, but at times it was also ragged: the orchestra lacked not volume but focus.

Nothing got in the way of the music in Bartók's last work, the *Piano Concerto No 3*. Wigglesworth showed real feeling for its blend of individuality and tradition, and he had a clear-minded, virtuosic soloist in Stephen Hough. The first movement was buoyant and full of lyrical freedom; the second, a look into the unknown by a composer on the brink of death, and the strangely exhilarating finale, completed this worthy tribute to a musical giant featured at this year's Proms.

With his flair for new music, Wigglesworth was very persuasive in David Sawer's *The greatest happiness principle*. It is an arresting score, full of nervous energy. Transparent textures, coloured by winds and percussion, and obsessively repeated rhythmic figures dominate the 15-minute piece, which makes an almost theatrical impact. The title comes from words by the 18th-century philosopher Jeremy Bentham, whose radical ideas on prison design also inspired the rigid structures of the piece. At one symbolic point near the end the form disintegrates into chaos, but throughout the rest Sawer writes for a large orchestra with meticulous care.

JOHN ALLISON

## Hard day's night

FOUR centuries of music for vocal ensemble were compressed into an hour and a quarter by the King's Singers, who drew a full and enthusiastic audience for a 10pm Prom. Their smoothly presented repertoire, each item given a few words of spoken introduction by one of the six singers, ranged as far back as the 16th-century Lassus and Janquin to start the programme, and demonstrated the all-purpose blandness that limits the group's style.

So, graphic a piece as Janquin's *La Guerre*, for instance, cries out for dramatic projection of its vividly descriptive battle scene, where the voices alone evoke the fanfares and other sounds of war, galloping hooves and the like. But these vocal effects were so trimly and even jauntily delivered as to rob them of dramatic character, while the smooth serenity of Lassus, invoking music as the greatest gift, reflected only the group's harmonising skill.

Likewise *Houses of Winter*, a motet written for them by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. The voices, sometimes precariously pitched, more successfully captured the frozen stillness of an Orkney winter in the poetry of George Mackay Brown than the im-

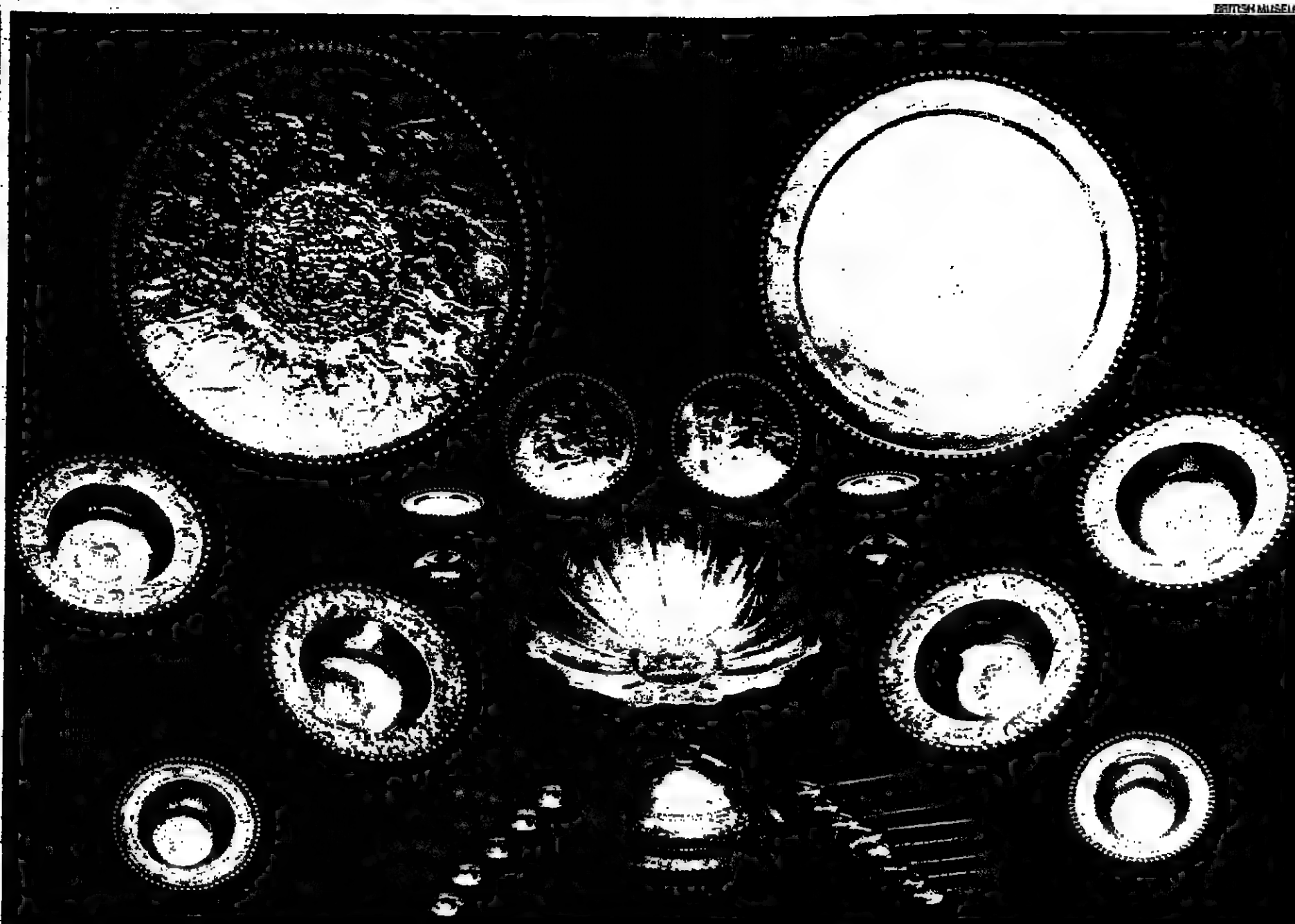
part of a sudden violent storm, although its luminous colour was slightly focused in the blend of tone.

They were most engaging in the corresponding blend and rhythmic pulse of three English madrigals by Weelkes, Morley and Wilbye, although the lovely *Wesp Mine Eyes* by Wilbye sounded more genial than sorrowful. However, the *Non-sense Madrigals* by Ligeti, also written for the group and heard here as a complete set of six for the first time in London, found the singers engagingly alert to the imaginative fun of the settings of Lewis Carroll and others.

After that the singers sadly, in my opinion, compromised their musical integrity by ending with special arrangements of four Lennon and McCartney songs, products of a catchpenny commercial cult-sounding merely sentimental and banal in this context which no amount of sophisticated vocal dressing-up could disguise, but which the audience adored.

NOEL GOODWIN

● Richard Morrison's column returns next week



One of the finest sets of silverware to survive the centuries since the Roman Empire, the 4th-century Mildenhall Treasure was found in Suffolk during the Second World War

## Those civilised old Britons

A breathtaking display of early treasures at the British Museum explodes the myth of our savage ancestors. Alison Beckett reports

THE Hollywood myth that Britons were savages before the Roman conquest and became only marginally more sophisticated after it should at last be dispelled by a wealth of decorated armour, jewellery, sculpture, architectural and other treasures on display, many for the first time, in a series of new galleries at the British Museum.

The galleries offer an unprecedented picture of Britain from 1700 BC, the start of the later Bronze Age, to the departure of the Roman army in AD 410. They indicate how the country was transformed by Roman roads and buildings, and how Britons were inundated with material goods. But Celtic and earlier art and traditions are also seen to survive and influence the Romans.

Misconceptions first arose because until archaeological discoveries began to be recorded in the 18th

century, historical knowledge of Britain depended on unreliable Greco-Roman authors. Julius Caesar, for example, declared British women uncivilised for having many husbands, while exaggerating his own achievements against supposedly fierce and primitive barbarians to disguise the fact that his raids were an illegal private enterprise.

Pre-Roman Britain, however, was far from uncivilised, to judge from treasures such as the Battersea Shield, with its exquisite swirling decoration embellished with bright enamel, which survived perhaps 2,000 years in the Thames before being dredged up last century.

The abstract pattern is typical of the work of highly accomplished

British artist-craftsmen. However, they were derided by their invaders, brought up on figurative design. So the British artists began imitating Classical style, producing souvenir-sized statues, for example, of gods and goddesses such as those found at Southbrook in Wiltshire — and their scant regard for realism resulted in naïve sculptures with more life than the originals.

Most identifiable villas with pools and elaborate mosaics and murals are now known to have been the homes of wealthy Britons, long accustomed to the import of luxury goods such as wine or precious metals, who rapidly adopted Roman fashions of dress and architecture. But the ornateness of a 4th-century

barn at Meonstoke in Hampshire, whose facade can be seen for the first time, has still to be explained.

Many such mysteries, however, may relate to the proliferation of religions which were never fully suppressed by Christianity. The spectacular Hoxne hoard of AD 400, containing gold and silver objects and thousands of coins in mint condition, also never shown before, was owned by a Christian aristocrat, according to the decorative symbols. Yet the representations on a belt buckle and finger rings found at Thetford, dated only about ten years earlier, are pagan, honouring the god Faunus, and the state of ecstasy induced in the worship of Bacchus is illustrated superbly on the priceless

collection of silver tableware from Mildenhall.

In northerly parts of Britain the Roman influence on pottery, trinkets and other everyday items is slight. But the Roman occupation seems to have been less turbulent than imagined, as demonstrated by segments of more than 200 writing tablets dating from AD 95 to 115 and found at the fort of Vindolanda near Hadrian's Wall, the oldest historical documents known from Britain.

One is from the commander's wife, inviting a friend from another fort to her birthday party, while others hint at wheeling and dealing in the organisation of supplies. British beer is described as costing twice as much as Egyptian, and at Vindolanda the Romans installed a resident brewer called Atracius to keep the soldiers happy.

● The British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1 (0171-636 1555)

## Sounding the last post

## THEATRE

Last Letters from Stalingrad  
Bridewell

a sort of recitative of doom.

Charlie Salaman, the director, does what she can to make epistolary angst visual and vivid. Old white sacks, bulging with what are presumably letters, lie on the stage. Shreds of paper litter the floor. And out of the debris step men in army greatcoats, their faces swathed in bandages. They are some of the 300,000 Axis troops who were to die at Stalingrad, and these are the missives that were never received by their parents and wives.

The piece lasts some 70 minutes: long enough to get over the overall point, which is that the victims of the battle were mostly not strutting Nazis but men with the same feelings you would probably have found on the Allied side under similarly dire circumstances. One Prussian officer talks of his continuing belief of the "happy resurgence of our homeland" and launches into Wagnerian boasts of the fulfilment he will find in death; but a more typical voice is that of the tank commander who felt obliged to put a hideously burnt Russian soldier out of his misery and can't sleep or stop weeping when he recalls the moment.

A few correspondents dare to be critical of Hitler or, as one puts it, "the man responsible for this". He is the son of a senior officer, and anxious that his surviving family should think hard about the wisdom of the war. One of his comrades berates his own father, a general, for not getting him posted out of the battlefield. The son of a pastor writes that he has looked for God in ratholes and among dead bodies, "but He does not exist in Stalingrad".

"We hear from a pianist who has lost his fingers, a would-be

put his suffering and death into perspective, and an actor who cannot face the reality of men without eyes or stomachs. We hear from the disillusioned, the angry and the fatalistic, sometimes via the device of requiring women to read the letters they never actually got while they prepare to do the ironing.

The problem, of course, is keeping the evening theatrically alive. Salaman's fine five-person cast does what it can, diving when gunfire starts, hurling about shredded paper like snowballs, even jostling and laughing. But what holds the attention are the words, which can be disconcertingly moving, even heroic. Who wrote home telling his wife to try to forget him and find herself a good, upright man for her own sake and that of his children? Not one of Churchill's boys, but a German victim of the manic Hitler.

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## Philip Howard



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darkest/africa.co.uk,  
I presume?

The last frontier has moved on. Tucson and Dodge City have become genteel retirement colonies. Hadrian's Wall has become a heritage site and, with a few egregious exceptions, the Scots are no longer revolting. Package tours ferry trippers up the Amazon or across the Sahara in the winsome footprints of *The English Patient*. (Those cowpokes of Hollywood have degenerated into whimsical tenderloin to vote so many Oscars to that sentimental sloop instead of to *Secrets and Lies*.)

The foothills of the Himalayas are now fifty with bin-liners discarded by trippers. It is possible that lost tribes are still waiting to be found in the wilder suburbs of Papua New Guinea or Tooting. But if you really want to go roaming with a hungry heart after new experiences and lost tribes, the last frontier has become Cyberspace. Our New York correspondent reported this week how the lost tribe of Melungeons, driven ever deeper into the Appalachians by five centuries of encroaching civilisation, have started to rediscover their roots on the Internet. Are they one of the Lost Tribes of Israel, or descendants of Dido and her Carthaginians who escaped from Rome across the Atlantic? The characteristic bumps on the back of their heads are evidently Turkish, and the Melungeons are susceptible to Middle Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean diseases. Why do Cherokee Indians wear turbans? Why do Creeks wear leazes? And why does your average Melungeon look like Saddam Hussein?

These are puzzling questions, but not beyond all conjecture. And the way to find their answers is no longer up the Nile or beyond Shangri-la. It is on screen. Herodotus, father of history, father of lies, was the first European who could afford to travel out of choice and at leisure. And ever since Herodotus, the inquisitive and romantic have gone on grand tours or safari to explore the world in person. But the secret places have now become so familiar from cruises and package tours and television that the last wilderness is on screen.

And virtual travel can be as testing as the real thing. Abandon hope all ye who press ENTER here. Sir John Mandeville, the 14th-century travel writer, claimed to have seen the pyramids and also people with no heads but eyes in their shoulders. The virtual traveller of the 21st century, browsing and surfing through databases measureless to man, can find lost tribes and forgotten ancestors. The *Mappa Mundi* discovered wonders such as the Bannan, the ferocious, ox-like creature that deterred its pursuers by artillery defecation at them. The modern digital traveller faces dangers as terrible as the siren in information gridlock and web brownouts, when the network slows down because of congestion. Desert tribes used to take to the sandstorm with swords drawn against the killing winds. I just punch the computer. And there are deadlier webs than the tarantula's.

And when the system crashes, the virtual traveller is marooned in solipsistic impotence. Herodotus and subsequent real travellers could improvise with a penknife or a credit card. But when the plug is pulled, the new Cyberwilderness is as desolate as the emptiest quarter of the Sahara. Rubbing two sticks together will do no good. The modern traveller has to cope with geek speak rather than pidgin, exec lingo instead of heads and shells, memo slang and logons rather than native bards.

Silicon Valley can be as lonely as the Valley of the Kings. Incompetent nincompoops may complain that the digital hunt for lost tribes is not as adventurous as the old-fashioned method, with *canibals* cooking pots and yellow Jurassic Park eyes glaring out of the undergrowth across millions of years. But the best travel writing has been done from the armchair. The best travel writers, including Herodotus, have used their imaginations more than their feet. Richard West, in his biography of Daniel Defoe published this week, demonstrates that *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* and Ireland was largely written in Stoke Newington, and that the famous travel book is a voyage through memory and imagination. Software can never replace greyware, in travel, history, the cinema or life.

To tackle religious tensions we need courtesy and firm compromise, not more legislation, says Paul Barker

## The law should let sleeping dogmas lie

Religion is a sleeping dogma the British prefer to let alone undisturbed. But every so often it turns round and bites back. This week the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, told a House of Commons select committee that he was examining proposals by the Commission for Racial Equality that "a specific law against incitement to religious hatred should be introduced, and a law against religious discrimination should be given further serious consideration." The commission also said that the law on blasphemy "needs to be abolished or to be extended to protect other religions," and not just Christianity.

It said all this in a report five years ago. John Major's Government ignored it. If you wonder why the subject has re-emerged now, it is worth remembering that the Home Secretary is the MP for Blackburn, where the Muslim vote is very important, and where Salman Rushdie was anathematised locally for publishing *The Satanic Verses*.

We could be talking about a Rotweiler of a reform. It is one thing to say, rightly, that no one should be penalised for their beliefs (as witness Northern Ireland, a province where religion has always been a lethally serious business). It is quite another thing to give any comfort to the so-called (and unrepresentative) Muslim Parliament. Its spokesman was duly quoted as saying that legal change was long overdue. He hoped it would lead to Mr Rushdie standing trial for incitement.

The British, in general, ignore religion. They are as un-churchy a nation as you could find in a month of secularist Sundays. Only about one in three firmly believe in some kind of God. Only six million or so people take part in regular

Christian worship: almost three million fewer than in the 1970s. Church doors are often locked, as if the only likely visitors are vandals. The days are long gone when the Church of England was the Tory party at prayer, while Methodism did the same job for Labour.

And yet, Tony Blair makes much of his Christian social ethic. And within the dought of unbelief, there is a new heaven. The concern about the law is only the latest piece of evidence. Old creeds decline; new creeds rise. There are now as many Mormons as Baptists, and more Muslims than Methodists. Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists go busily about their trade. In South London, old chapels blossom again as African pentecostal churches.

Looked at in business terms, the Commission for Racial Equality was shrewd to eye new territory. Race is, arguably, of diminishing significance. A study from the independent Policy Studies Institute found, earlier this year, that "religion (not skin colour) is central to the self-definition of the majority of South Asian people"; and Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are, as a group, by far the largest ethnic minority in Britain. With this in mind, no doubt, officials are quietly testing a possible religious question for the next decennial

census. It would be the first time such a question had been put in Great Britain since the mid-19th century, when it was spurred by panic over "invasion" by Irish Catholic immigrants.

The majority remains indifferent; for others, religion matters more and more. But does this mean it should acquire special new protection? Change could produce perverse outcomes.

Take blasphemy. Under the present, moribund law, there has only been one prosecution in the past seven years. Mary Whitehouse nailed *Gay News* in 1977, for printing a poem that claimed Christ on the Cross felt masochistic love for a Roman soldier. Ever since Milton's fiercely anti-censorship arguments in the *Areopagitica*, the right to publish what you want has been hard fought. This is scarcely the time to turn back. One price of living in a plural society is that everyone has to put up with statements that offend them, without resorting to violence or the law.

Some creeds, and Islam is one, find it hard to adjust to being just one set of beliefs among many. But, as Professor Bikhu Parekh pointed out in the policy institute's study, the wider community in Britain "is rightly entitled to expect that its immigrants, who have chosen to come and settle in its midst, would make

every effort to become part of it, and in that sense identify with it." The blasphemy law, though illogical and useless, is best left to fade into a dead cinder. To stir the embers will help no one.

Blasphemy law is concerned with various forms of attack on religion as such. But a law against incitement to religious hatred would be aimed at anyone stirring up anger against people identified purely by their religion. There is, in fact, such a law on the statute book already, but it only applies to Northern Ireland. It has hardly ever been used, let alone successfully. This is not a good precedent for enlarging its geographical scope. As for religious discrimination, a House of Lords ruling permits much of this to be tackled under existing law, as indirect racial discrimination. Need we go further?

It is right, of course, that all opportunities should be equally open to everyone. In religion, as over censorship, this has been a long-fought battle. The Test Acts, discriminating against Catholics, Jews and Nonconformists who sought public office, were eventually abolished. But the obstacles to acquiring university education were not removed till 1871. It is also right that all racial assaults should

be vigorously pursued (though here, too, I doubt if a new law will help; does anyone think that, for example, Stephen Lawrence's killers escaped because the law wasn't tough enough?).

But, beyond this, we need a firm but mutually courteous process of compromise. In France, the desire of Muslim girls to wear scarves at school has caused a deep educational crisis. It is seen as an attack on the republican concept of lay schooling. Here, we have cleared that hurdle. R.A. Butler's celebrated 1944 Education Act was, among other things, a successful attempt to bring religious schools (Roman Catholic and Anglican) into the state system. Islamic schools can tread the same path.

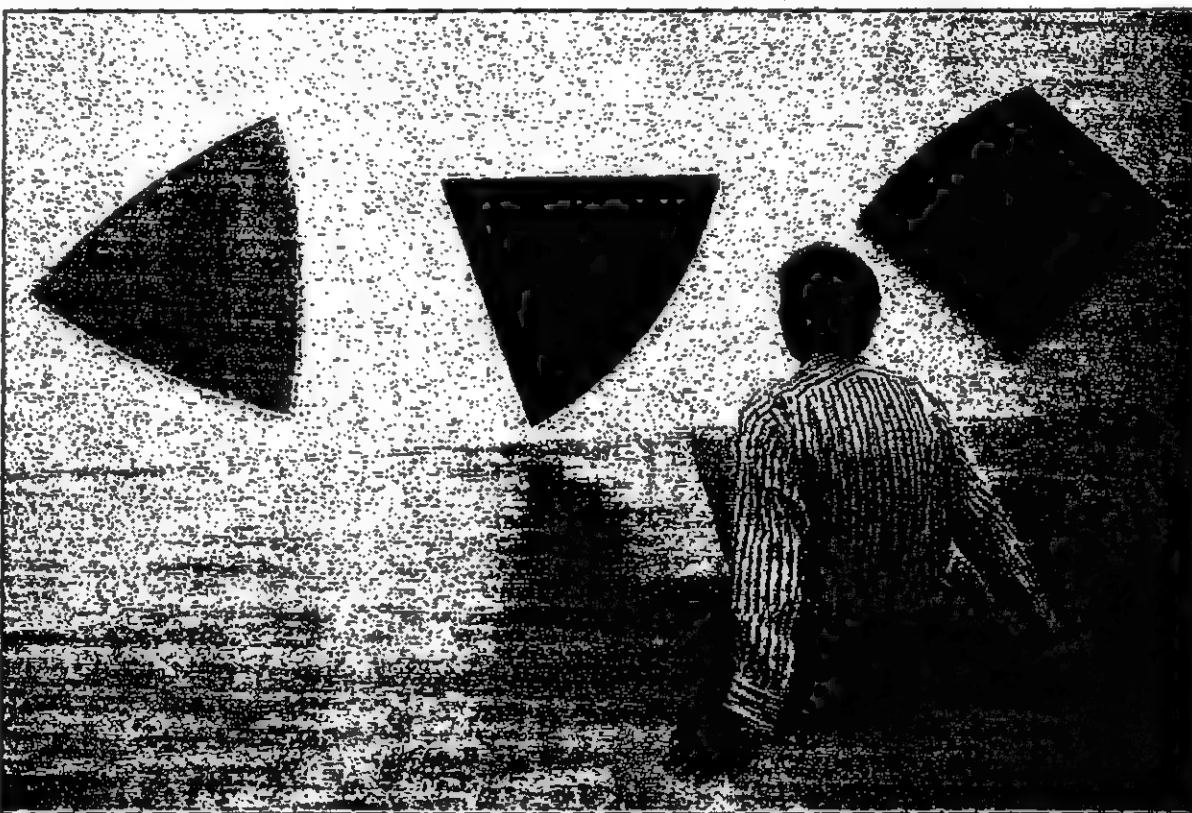
New mosques are rising in many cities. But, as the row over a minaret in Oxford shows, minorities need to show tact, perhaps even more than majorities. The 19th-century Jewish immigration was a model example of this. Retrospectively, that attempt to be always more British than the British had its comic side. But it avoided, as it was meant to, any accusation of "dual loyalty".

Judaism is not a proselytising religion. For other creeds, it is important to remember that the natives may not take kindly to missionaries. "Britain," in Bikhu Parekh's words, "already has better anti-discrimination legislation than other European countries." There is a limit to what you can do by law. Behaviour is a slippery beast hard to trap or to tempt to new haunts. But sometimes, you just have to accept the slowness of things. The law should not rush in. Some things are best left to the angels.

The author is a Senior Fellow of the Institute of Community Studies

## Dumbing down at the Tate

Exhibitions of Mondrian and Kelly may have attracted critical praise, but where is the passion in their abstract art?



"People find these paintings moving, they spend time with them and profess aesthetic, moral, even spiritual uplift"

Ten white rooms are filled with large cutout shapes. They are in primary colours, some triangular, some curved, some rhomboid. Most are placed on the walls, some on the floor. One is simply a sheet of "weathering steel". Try as I do, I find it impossible to linger more than 15 minutes in these rooms. Entry costs £5 and the 335-page catalogue is £25. Money is not returned to dissatisfied customers.

The Ellsworth Kelly retrospective in London is the Tate Gallery's summer spectacular, joined this week by a large Mondrian show in adjacent rooms. The critics have treated both to a feast of superlatives. To the *Telegraph's* Richard Doherty, Kelly's work is a "long and arduous search for pure beauty... a quest for a higher spiritual or moral truth". To Richard Cork of *The Times*, Kelly is "chaste... austere... sensual... tough... brooding". Even Brian Sewell of the *Standard*, no sorry on modern art, writes of an "intense, luminous, vibrant" voluptuousness.

Once again I set out to do justice to an art that leaves me emotionally cold and intellectually baffled. Honest people, whose views I respect, find these paintings moving. They spend time with them and profess aesthetic, moral, even spiritual uplift. So come on, Jenkins, make an effort. You know what you see, lines, colours and shapes. What is it that others see that so escapes you?

I am an ardent consumer of art. It does not move me to tears, as can music. But I visit galleries of all persuasions and love them. I am prepared to test my sensibility on severed heads, piles of rags and heaps of dung. If I am wary of being conned, it is not for want of taking risks. When I walked out of a concert at the Institute for Contemporary Art, after listening for ten minutes to a single note on a synthesiser, it was only after realising that I was the victim of an Arts Council three-card trick.

So what did I make of the Tate's abstract festivity? Any national gallery is right to celebrate works of art of historical interest. Mondrian and Kelly clearly have intellectual appeal. But passion? I felt no more than a mild tingle at strident colours in so much white space. They might merit Sewell's voluptuousness. The lines and curves have rhythm. When set alongside rhomboids, they suggest depth and movement. There is also serenity in every shrine. The Cistercians stripped their rooms of content, the better to contemplate the metaphysical. But they were not nihilists. They filled their spaces with ritual. Once one gets used to the colours, Kelly's spaces become boring.

Am I therefore too easily bored, unwilling to wait for some psychedelic experience? I turn for guidance to the psalter of this church, the catalogue. It tells me that, no, I am to accept the paintings for what they are. They arise "partly from a rediscovery of the aesthetics of Plato", that "the highest beauty is to be found in geometric forms". Abstractionism is "an idealising and sometimes quasi-mystical desire to free art from the material world to represent the pure, the ordered, the spiritual." Kelly himself asks us to "turn off the mind and look only with eyes" such that "everything becomes abstract". Like Frank Stella, he wants us to see "only what we see". He "does not use colour to define form but to itself become form".

Some of this makes sense, but only just. The Cubists brought abstract shape to the task of artistic representation, and the Impressionists brought abstract colour. (See the superb *Seurat* show at the National Gallery.) The masters of

the Renaissance used geometry as a compositional tool. Conversely, the American scholar Edward Tufte has shown how applying aesthetic standards to graphs and charts enhances their meaning. Rorschach and

"a new freedom: there was no longer the need to compose." Offered a big enough cheque, many artists would say amen to that. This is understandable, if not admirable.

All such struggle was to a purpose. What abstraction does is to deny purpose. When Kelly asks us to turn off our minds he is merely leaving the room. To use current jargon, such art is the ultimate "dumbing down". The catalogue protests that, to Kelly, "suggestions of depth, hints of perspective, evocations of atmosphere, all these were faults inherited from painting, errors to be expunged so that art could progress". Kelly's art offers "a personal autonomy engaged with the world but disinclined to capitulate to any of the forces encountered there". I really do not know what this means.

Kelly and his circle certainly lead the lifestyle of artists, not interior decorators. They are dedicated to a vocation which requires great hardship. They

even started out in the representational realm. Mondrian's early works are mournful landscapes. Kelly could sketch portraits, though not so as to justify the catalogue's reverence. Yet late Mondrian look like plans for microcircuits or Japanese screens. To the art historian Robert Hughes, he was "one of the supreme artists of the 20th century". But he never explains why. There must be something here beyond neatness and prettiness, and a restless search for a unique selling proposition.

Both Mondrian and Kelly disappear behind the veil of abstraction, as if in retreat from their own talent. I sense two ageing playboys playing to themselves, first one hand, then one finger, then one nose. All artists are vulnerable to the terrible critique, "His early work was his best". These have found refuge only in a minimalism that defies such criticism. An artist who needs 80 pages of flowery catalogue prose to explain his work must have something to hide.

The true achievement of abstraction is to be uncriticisable. A bad Kelly is as meaningless as a fake one. Even the hanging of the Kelly show is beyond comment, since Kelly did it. The hanging is the art. The painting is the frame. All comprehension lies in the catalogue. Not a critical word have I read that is adverse, for fear that the whole abstractionist pack of cards might collapse. In consequence, the true artist is the doorman who decides what goes to the gallery and what to the bin. But say that to a modern curator and you are what psychoanalysts call "in denial".

I am sure there is perfection in a curve, in a pure upper-C, in a Dulux colour chart or, for that matter, in a sentence *Sun* editorial. These things can be done well, but not very well. Art is the product of words, notes, colours, shapes, but they are tools. I refuse to accord them exalted cultural status just because their users demand it.

Of course I can pack up and admit that Kelly and Mondrian are show me. I can accept that they are members of a religious sect whose hierarchs worship relics, sanctify charlatans and sell indulgences. Their exhibitions are a private Mass from which my lack of faith excludes me. Criticism is not debate but anathema. Sorry, they may say, but you are aesthetically challenged. Please leave the building.

"I will not buy this. I thrill to novelty in other arts. New plays, films or novels are hugely stimulating. So is much new art and architecture. In short, I am back where I began. The emperor still has no clothes, the couriers are still cheering — and I am still left pointing at his privates."

### Simon Jenkins

Mandelbrot applied pictorial principles to psychology and mathematics.

I admit more. Art must shock with novelty. All modern artists, as they grow older, strain to escape the discipline of representing nature, as if bored with life. Kelly wrote how abstraction offered him

## Tories united

END of term at Westminster saw the wedding yesterday of Julie Kirkbride, Tory MP for Bromsgrove, and Andrew MacKay, Tory MP for Bracknell. It was an unashamedly political affair. The blessing was held in the crypt chapel beneath the House of Commons and was followed by a reception on the terrace.

William Hague, the Tory leader,



"Mr Heston seems to be here already, Your Majesty"

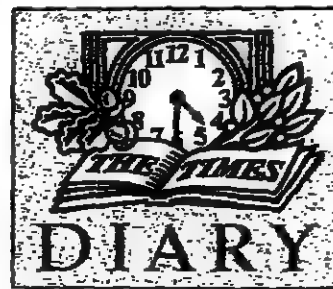
spoke for the guests and advised those in need of presents for the couple to head for Randall's of Uxbridge, the store owned by John Randall, the Tory victor in Thursday's by-election. His speech was acclaimed by those present as the funniest they had ever heard from him.

An air of menace was lent to the ushering by three Tory whips who worked with MacKay before their recent election defeat: a burly lineup of Derek Corway, Andrew Mitchell and Roger Knapman.

Kirkbride and MacKay made their getaway in a Bentley lent to them by Greg Knight, the former Tory whip who also lost his seat at the election but has the consolation of a small fleet of classic cars.

He had said the couple could use any one of them. MacKay had wanted a sporty Allard coupé. It took Mrs Knight, however, to make the point that although natty, the Allard was extremely impractical.

When the men folded their arms and refused to believe her, she dug out her wedding dress, which was similar to the one Miss Kirkbride was to wear, put it on, climbed into the car and invited MacKay to



squeeze into the extremely tight space beside her. Her point proved, MacKay went for the more spacious Bentley, which had been Miss Kirkbride's choice all along.

Over on Blackfriars Bridge, the word has gone out that *The Express* wants to employ a poet. The plan is to have a sort of poet laureate on call at all times to write a few lines on events of great importance. Anyone interested should submit examples of their work to the Editor, Richard Addis.

Dunmoling EXHAUSTED by his environmental tunnelling, Swampy, the human mole, has gone to the Devon coast for a summer holiday. "He is fed up with all the press attention,"

says a colleague at Friends of the Earth in Manchester. "No one knows which bit of beach he's on. Not even his mother."

Should he return to work, adversaries should note his preferred mode of address. "From now on he wants to be called Daniel Hopper," says his spokeswoman. "He is fed up with Swampy."

No Norman THE absence of Norman Lamont, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, from John Major's last hon-



Lamont: peerage promised

ours list will not be of too much concern to the man himself. Lamont, who is without a parliamentary seat or apparent work, is said to have been told by William Hague that he can have a peerage from him whenever he wants.

Hague's loyalty goes back to the days when he served as Chancellor Lamont's parliamentary private secretary, a relationship that established the closest of bonds.

New Labour's efforts to blend socialism and Thatcherism reaches a nadir in the latest issue of *Good Housekeeping*, in which David Blankfein, the Education Secretary, is interviewed. "We've got to make your readers feel they never again have to buy private education," he says. "They can spend the money on a holiday instead."

### Black day

BEREFT, fearful and all in black, the cast of *Vogue* magazine gathered at the village of Fiddlinghoe in Sussex yesterday to scatter the ashes of their contributing editor, Lesley Cunniffe. Before her death in March, Cunniffe, 51, left instructions that she should be remembered with a picnic.

More than 100 colleagues and friends obliged yesterday, clutch-



Paltrow and Pitt: since their split, Brad has cut a lonely figure

ing their hats in the blustery showers and sipping an alfresco glass of champagne before departing by train to London to continue the party in Kensington Square. "It's such a lovely idea," said one of those left behind in *Vogue's* Mayfair offices yesterday. "Lesley always said that dying could be fun."

### Pitt-iful

YESTERDAY morning, an energetic friend set off for a jog around Central Park in New York at 6.30am. There, on a bench near the entrance to the park, was a dishev-

elled-looking blond man looking like a hobo. Off went the friend on her jog — but something about him nagged at her. He had moved to a more visible slump by the time she passed again, and beside him was a mounting pile of cigarette butts. It was Brad Pitt, movie star.

Pitt, who recently separated from his long-term girlfriend, the actress Gwyneth Paltrow, has been feeling sorry for himself. Red-eyed, grey-skinned and alone in the early morning, the boy needs someone to take him in hand.

P.H.S.

هكذا من الأصل





## END-OF-TERM REPORT

A good start, but marks are likely to fall.

Tony Blair's first three months in office have confounded almost all expectations. He warned us not to expect a dazzling first 100 days, yet voters are still shading their eyes. Those who worried before the election that he would be too cautious are now surprised at his radicalism. Yet many Conservatives are relieved that he is, after all, no secret socialist. And the cynical who thought that nothing would change whichever party was elected have found that the country actually feels quite different now.

That is not to say that Labour's record so far is one of unmitigated success. There have been ill-judged attempts to intervene where government has no jurisdiction — such as the affair of the Camelot directors' bonuses. The Budget was conceived in haste and had to be amended in haste too. The sagas of Mohammad Sarwar, Robert Wareing and the Doncaster Labour Party show that no party is immune from sleaze. And the failure to sort out Lord Simon's shareholdings is a problem still unresolved.

But the British, for the moment, are in a forgiving mood. If a change is as good as a rest, a new Government after 18 years of the old is a truly refreshing experience. Mr Blair has even succeeded in making politics fashionable. The *glitterati* who trooped through the doors of Downing Street earlier this week would never have turned out in such numbers for John Major. Nor, probably, would he have enjoyed their company.

But, despite a continuing opinion poll lead of 34 points, unprecedented for a governing party, the first small cloud has passed over the sun. Labour might not have banked on winning the Uxbridge by-election from the Tories, but it did not expect the Conservative majority to increase by 3,000 votes. The Tories out-liberalled the Liberals, running a campaign that focused solely on local issues and made much of the local credentials of their candidate. The result was that the Lib Dem vote shrank by two-thirds, and the

non-local Labour candidate failed to make headway.

If the voters of Uxbridge were sending a message to Mr Blair, it was one of policy but of style. They did not appreciate having a candidate imposed upon them, when they had a perfectly good local man already. Labour's central direction, which helped it to win the election and has so far ensured strong and confident government, threatens also to become its weakness. Voters may soon tire of this overcontrolling administration; and so could ministers and journalists, who resent being treated like naughty schoolchildren. When the backlash comes, which it must do sooner or later, this obsession with control will irritate us most.

So, just as the Prime Minister prepared for Government, he would do well now to start preparing for adversity. If "Things Can Only Get Better" was the theme tune of Labour's campaign, "Things Can Only Get Worse" should be the warning motif of the next two years. Although Mr Blair, Gordon Brown and David Blunkett have already taken radical steps, most of their colleagues have opted for reviews, which are politically costless to initiate. When those reviews report, and decisions have to be taken, enemies will be made to join the existing ranks of field sports enthusiasts and prospective students. No Government remains popular for ever, and the higher the polls soar, the further they have to fall.

Mr Blair has never yet faced unpopularity. Ever since he became leader in July 1994, his party's opinion poll ratings have been unimpairedly buoyant. He has still to be tested in difficult circumstances, but the signs are not good. Even now, he looks rattled and peevish when challenged at Prime Minister's Questions. If he wants to ride out the next few years with confidence, he should cultivate the robustness of Margaret Thatcher and avoid at all costs the prickliness of her successor.

## BRIDES' LIB

Betrothal would be a retrograde tribal recession down the aisle.

At this peak of the wedding season, a theologian wants to reform the British approach to matrimony. In his paper for *The Church Times*, the Rev Beau Stevenson proposes to bring weddings up to date by bringing back the medieval rite of betrothal. In this, couples intending to marry were blessed on the church steps in order to allow them to live together. Betrothal was an ancient form of trial marriage, like the northern "bundling" or jumping over the broomstick.

Then later, if they decided to take the final plunge, they made their irrevocable vows "till death us do part" at the altar. There was no divorce available to anticipate death. Chaucer's Wife of Bath had betrothed five husbands at the church door, not counting other dear companions of her youth. But, prudently, she never made it to the altar.

The origins of betrothal go back to Jewish and Roman wife purchase. The giving of a ring is an earnest of good faith. And in medieval societies, where marriages were arranged and predicated on children, betrothal was the first step. Witnesses guaranteed the truth. And echoes of this two-step wedding mark survive. In the Church of England's solemnisation of matrimony, the couple still plight their troth.

But in modern societies, where couples choose their own partners and premarital sexual relations are condoned (or encouraged), betrothal is a relic. Dr Stevenson may think he is trying to bring church ritual into line with modern relationships, and the world of contraception and divorce. A morning wedding has become fashionable. Then, if the marriage does not work out, at least the whole day has not been wasted. Last week official statistics indicated that

four out of ten couples who choose the virginial symbolism of a white wedding are already living together. Nearly as many brides arrive pregnant at the altar today as were gratified to do so in the Middle Ages.

And there is hubbub as well as charm to modern marriage à la mode. The contest between sides of the church to see which female supporters are wearing the bigger hats is a vestige of rivalry between kinship groups. The tradition that the father of the bride pays for the wedding is another survival from ancient wife purchase. Sensible modern families share the cost. And bridesmaids and ushers today are treading in the footsteps of ancient tribal supporters. But at the Stone Age custom of putting the presents on display as trophies is fading.

For marriage is still a tribal ritual, even at the end of the 20th century. Not all its traditions are quaint or obsolete. The practice of breaking a wine glass at the end of the Jewish wedding ceremony is a symbol that all is not necessarily going to be sweetness and light, and that marriage can be for the worse as well as the better. That is a piece of timeless tribal wisdom. But most couples now take the decision of when to climb into bed together. They usually have done so, even in medieval and Victorian society. And Church and State can only recognise, license and bless a marriage between two individuals.

"Betrothed" is a more elegant designation than "significant other half". But relationships in a modern democracy are better left to the individuals who are to be related. The Church of England could revive some other traditions in liturgy, texts and holiness. But reversion to betrothal and bride price would be a step backwards down the aisle.

## CROOKED BAT

Play up! play up! and play the game!

Cricket is a game full of words more curious than those found in other, lesser sports. Words — like duck, gully, googly, forward short leg, Chinese cut or Harrow drive, grubber, beamer, silly point and extra cover — that would appear to belong only in a thesaurus of silly words.

The most curious word of all, however, is not from cricket's manuals of play. It is "sledging", a modern euphemism used to describe activities that range from verbal abuse to the ruder gestures made with calloused index fingers. As with the game of cricket itself, the Australians are better at sledging than we are. Their men are pithier, their flavour more pungent, their fuses shorter, and their vocabulary richer. Why, even their beer's are called "XXXX".

But we are, it seems, getting more adept at sledging than we used to be, with our schoolboy cricketers in particular showing great promise. The sages who run our schools, however, are deeply alarmed by this, and are planning a purge of "unsporting conduct" on the cricket field. They are preparing to address the subject at the Headmasters' Conference, and have blamed the outbreak of vituperation on England's playing fields squarely on contact with abusive Australian schoolboys. And on South African schoolboys too, some of whom are said to be evil little thugs who "frequently overstep the mark".

This degeneration, it is said, is all the result of a chain of contagion. The senior

Aussie players are brutes. The Aussie juniors emulate their seniors, becoming brutes themselves. They then play English juniors (who have no senior brutes to emulate), infecting them with the virus. Cut to spinning, swearing little Johnny from Tonbridge. Cut back to schoolmaster, tut-tutting in the pavilion. Bemoan the state of cricket.

Bemoan, therefore, the state of our civilisation, for the link has been made for as long as the blessed game has been played. It was made, somewhat overheated, by Sir Henry John Newbolt, whose response to a schoolboy game today would be an anguished gasp, not a "breathless hush". It was made, most elegantly of all, by C. L. R. James, whose *Beyond a Boundary* held that all men are naked oafs unless clothed in cricket's fabric. It has been made frequently, too, in the leader columns of this newspaper, which has lamented the decline in standards for as long as standards have declined — forever, in other words.

But if we can lament, we can laud too. The headmasters are right to act. The line between legitimate aggression and abuse is often a fine one. But it does exist, in cricket as much as in the stock market, or in the rush for seats on trains. Our cricketers have often lost, but they have tended to know where that line is drawn. If our youngsters are bad at social geometry, let them be taught afresh. Lose the match if you must, but never lose your cool, your shirt, or your rag. That is the way of the "fair dinkum" Englishman.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

### 'Pursuit' of Lord Simon on conflict of interest question

From Lord Poole

Sir, Whilst politicians may be having fun in their Westminster cockpit harrowing him, we should regret the pursuit of Lord Simon of Highbury leading article, "Whatever Simon says" (August 1).

As I learn myself when I was seconded to the No 10 Policy Unit in 1992, in an age of professional politicians (most of whom know all to little about the real world) we badly need as many outsiders as possible to bring their experience to bear on government. There is almost always a career cost in making such a move. There is often a financial one as well. Most do it because they believe that it is clearly in the nation's interest. Let us not make it a virtual impossibility by setting entirely unreasonable demands, such as those being directed at Lord Simon. The safeguards and transparency are more than adequate.

We will all come to regret it if outsiders cease to be brought in. If anything, we should be doing all we can to foster the movement in both directions — outward as well as inward. The Conservatives know this perfectly well from their own experience and will no doubt again wish to bring in outsiders themselves when they return to power. They should shut up and let Lord Simon get on with his job.

Yours faithfully,

POOLE,  
53 The Chase, SW4,  
August 1.

From Mr Ian Martin

Sir, Lord Simon's defence of continuing to hold his BP shareholdings once appointed as a Minister of the Crown ("Don't scare tycoons away from politics", August 1) demonstrates a startling naivety about both politics and what actually constitutes a conflict of interest.

"I am a businessman, not a politician... I made it clear that I did not intend to enter the world of party politics," he states. If Lord Simon wishes to stay out of politics he should not have accepted a position in the Government. It is not for him to declare that he is outside party politics. He is a Labour Minister, in Government. He

### Pensions and fairness

From Mr W. M. Williamson

Sir, During the pension debate little has been heard of "inflation", but Mr R. F. Jones (letter, July 28) rightly highlights this.

Government cannot afford the cost of modest, basic state pensions and now wishes to put this burden onto individuals. Fair enough, but the cost of an inflation-proofed pension is way beyond the pocket of most of us, yet Government is still offering such pensions to hundreds of thousands of their civil servants.

Surely this is unfair and needs to be corrected. Why should the wealth-creating section of the community pay for the pensions of others which they cannot afford for themselves.

Yours etc,

W. M. WILLIAMSON  
(Proprietor),  
Portsmouth Engineering,  
227 West Street,  
Fareham, Hampshire,  
July 28.

From Mr David Howitt

Sir, The Government claims to wish to encourage all citizens to make provision for their old age. Yet the reduction in the advance corporation tax (ACT) credit, by reducing the value of personal pensions and company schemes based on money purchase, discriminates in the opposite direction.

Members of company final-salary schemes should not be affected, although their discretionary pension increases may be reduced. However, their employers will in due course have to contribute more to their company schemes once any current surplus is used up.

The real winners are civil servants and others in the state-funded pension schemes, whose pensions will be entirely unchanged.

Yours faithfully,

DAVID HOWITT,  
Elveden,  
1 Littleworth Avenue, Esher, Surrey,  
July 22.

### Raj preserved

From Mrs Audrey Hannan

Sir, Mr Anthony Peers (letter, July 30) writes of British Council and DTI collaboration with the University of Mumbai to restore its Gothic Revival buildings.

On a recent visit to Calcutta I was gratified to find that the British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia continues to care wonderfully for the South Park Street Cemetery grave of my great-great-grandfather, a prominent 19th-century doctor.

My tiny pang of guilt that the money had not been spent on the homeless millions of the city was somewhat dispelled when I saw a family obviously living in one of the larger, grander tombs.

Yours faithfully,

AUDREY HANNAN,  
116 Northampton Road,  
Brixworth, Northamptonshire,  
July 30.

is therefore accountable for his conduct and the impression he creates. If he does not like this then he should resign.

He also states that he has removed himself from any conflict of interest as regards his role as a Minister and in his BP shareholding. However, in passing he says that European gas liberalisation "does not specifically relate to BP". BP is a major player in the European gas industry. Any moves on deregulation of that industry would significantly affect BP. Lord Simon's definition of conflict of interest appears not to cover such circumstances. In which case his words give no confidence that he would recognise a conflict of interest if and when one arose.

I believe that he should divest himself completely of any such shares in BP or resign as a Minister.

Yours faithfully,

IAN MARTIN (Conservative

candidate, Croydon North, 1997,  
352 Shakespeare Tower,  
Barbican, EC2.

From Mr R. G. J. Winchester

Sir, Actually, I am surprised that Lord Simon only holds £2 million-worth of shares in BP. Given his contribution to that company and BP's contribution to the UK economy, this level of shareholding is remarkably modest.

In an old-fashioned pre-Conservative Government era this would smack of someone taking pride in what he is achieving and content to take only a moderate level of reward for his efforts.

Thus, I think we can be content that Lord Simon's integrity is already well proven and that young William Hague's protestations are simply a reflection of what his generation have come to expect of politicians and, regrettably, some industry leaders.

Let us hope that the cynicism and distrust that dominated Mr Hague's formative years and which now obviously affect his outlook on life will soon be displaced with a set of more positive views.

Yours sincerely,

R. WINCHESTER,  
The Old Schoolhouse,  
Old Rayne, Aberdeenshire,  
August 1.

### Drinking and dining

From Mr Osman Streater

Sir, John Lloyd began his interesting inquiry into dubland articles, July 28-30) by stating that these "sodalities", these "most English of institutions" were, not unusually, invented by foreigners. He cites the Italian founder of White's 300 years ago.

The true inventors, hardly indeed foreigners, lived rather earlier. It is all there in Cicero's *de Senectute*, written in 44 BC:

Our fathers did well in calling the reclining of friends at feasts a "convivium", because it implies a communion of life, which is a better designation than that of the Greeks, who call it sometimes a "drinking together" and sometimes an "eating together", thereby apparently exalting what is of least value in these associations above that which gives them their greatest charm.

The two key words used by Cicero are *sodalitas* and *convivium*, which come together in the official motto of this club. The unofficial motto, "Hang your halo in the hall", would by the sound of it not go down too well in the deal-making new clubs Mr Lloyd describes, where titles and job descriptions are everything.

Yours faithfully,

OSMAN STREATER,  
Savile Club, 69 Brook Street, W1,  
July 30.

### Faceless 'fat cats'

From Mr Nigel Dewar Gibb

Sir, Mr George Racz (letter, July 26) defends the so-called "fat cats" by suggesting they "create lasting monuments for the benefit of the country".

But those wealthy business people such as Branson, Tate, Carnegie, Gulbenkian, Fraser, Clor, Saatchi and so many other public benefactors whose names become associated with galleries, charitable foundations, etc., are the wealth creators not "fat cats".

"Fat cats", by contrast, are in my opinion the many faceless and undistinguished directors of companies who award themselves huge salaries, pensions and option benefits, whose

From Mr Richard Heller

Sir, Lord Simon's article today does not make clear whether he complied with his obligation to consult the Prime Minister over the proposed arrangements for his private shareholdings.

This obligation is expressed quite clearly in paragraph 103 of *Questions of Procedure for Ministers*, in the version in force when Lord Simon took office.

Where there is a doubt (as over a private interest) it will almost always be better to relinquish or dispose of the interest but in such cases the Prime Minister must be the final judge, and Ministers should submit any such case to him for his decision.

"It was decided," writes Lord Simon, in the passive, "that I should keep my BP shares until the situation is reviewed next January..." Decided by whom? Was the decision submitted to the Prime Minister for judgment, and if so, when, and did he endorse it?

Yours sincerely,

RICHARD HELLER,  
Oval Publishing,  
30 Cresswell Road, SW9,  
August 1.

From the Reverend Arundel Barker

Sir, The coincidence in today's *Times* of the article by Lord Simon and the report of the latest ministerial rules issued by the Government suggests the question, "Whom do I blame for what?" Is it Lord Simon, or Peter Mandelson, or the Prime Minister?

But I suppose it is the same question Modernist theologians have always faced when they claim to have uncovered a "doubtful" passage in, say, the prophecy of Jeremiah. "Do I blame Jeremiah, or his secretary Baruch, or God?"

But is it not unwise for Tony Blair to encourage us to ask ourselves such a question — doubtless, time after time, after time?

Yours faithfully,

ARUNDEL BARKER,  
7 Bull Farm Mews,  
Bull Lane,  
Matlock, Derbyshire,  
August 1.

From Mr Peter King

Sir, The reason why Grillion's Club meets at Brown's Hotel, as Mr Lloyd mentions (July 29), is that Brown's is on the site in Albemarle Street of an earlier hotel founded by Alexander Grillion at the beginning of the 19th century.

Originally known as Grillion's, its purpose was to provide a neutral ground for Whigs and Tories at which they could dine together without the acrimony characterised in their parliamentary encounters. It was commonly said that "the English Constitution is a democracy tempered by Grillion's".

Grillion himself was formerly *chef de cuisine* to John Cress, a Whig MP raised to the peerage in 1806. His hotel was much respected, but had to come to an end when the lease in Albemarle Street expired. It continued at other premises however and other Grillions moved to Grosvenor Square to occupy a hotel there called the Coburg. This eventually became the Connaught, which this year celebrates its centenary.

Yours sincerely,

PETER KING  
(Author, *The Connaught Story*, 1997),  
Nicholas Corner,  
Sibford Gower,  
Banbury, Oxfordshire,  
July 31.

emoluments come from shareholders' funds, and whose input and presence on their various boards passes largely unnoticed. These individuals are appointed and retire without seemingly causing a ripple in the company's fortunes.

I agree that you cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the rich, but let us distinguish between the creative rich benefactors whose inspiration gives employment to many, and those passengers who will seldom give back to society any part of what they have been fortunate enough to receive from others.

Yours etc,

NIGEL DEWAR GIBB,  
15 Kirklee Road, Glasgow 12.

the Government consider sealing off the M25 to the people of Surrey and west London, for instance? Or ban drivers from leaving the motorway in this sector?

There are no painless solutions, but there is a best option for this particular area: widen the motorway within its existing boundaries and invest immediately in other forms of transport to avoid the need of ever having to widen the M25 again.

Yours sincerely,

P. WATERS  
(Head, Roads and  
Transportation Policy),  
The Automobile Association,  
Norfolk House, Priestley Road,  
Basingstoke, Hampshire,  
July 29.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

### No 'dead-end' for Belgian okapi

From the Ambassador of Belgium

Sir, Matthew Parris, in his Political Sketch of July 17, "Labour's okapi gallops towards a Darwinian dead-end", is of course right to call the Antwerp Zoo "an unexpected pleasure of Belgium as a tourist destination". I wish, however, to reassure him that although the okapi in Antwerp might occasionally "huddle in the Belgian mist", it is certainly not the case that their expression is one of "infinite pathos" because they realise that they are at "a Darwinian dead-end". In Antwerp they are not.

In the last 20 years, 30 young okapi have been born in the "dazzle" and "mist" Mr Parris so graphically (if not always climatically correct) describes. Antwerp Zoo — so I am told by the keeper of its okapi, Mr Van Puyenbroek — is very successful in breeding okapi, which is not at all an easy task. The pregnancy takes 14 months and the female okapi is excessively meticulous in choosing her mate (who seems to serve no other purpose and is immediately dismissed).

Mr Parris will be pleased to learn that although London Zoo has only one okapi, it is expecting another one soon... through the good offices of Antwerp Zoo.

Yours etc,  
LODE WILLEMS,  
Belgian Embassy,  
103 Eaton Square, SW1,  
July 30.

### Good breeding

From Mrs Lindley Good

Sir, The naturalists who destroyed the hybrid embryo of a Spix's and an Illiger's macaw (report, July 29) were misguided in my view. Had it survived, the chick might well have been sterile; if not, and it had bred back to the last remaining Spix's or with another Illiger's macaw, the result might not have been so very dire.

Rather than see hybrids fluttering around the Brazilian forests, the scientists involved would seem to prefer to see Spix's macaw die out altogether in the wild. But nature provides some species with a last-ditch opportunity to pass on their genes in this way and, having no other options, our lonely Spix's is clearly prepared to risk it. Who are we to argue? In nature, half a loaf, genetically speaking, is always better than none.

Yours faithfully,  
LINDLEY GOOD,  
21 North End,  
Meldreth, Royston, Hertfordshire,  
July 29.

### Moral politics

From Mr Andrew E. A. Selous

Sir, In response to David Selbourne's remarks (letter, July 28) on the "ethical impoverishment" of Conservative politics, I would like to suggest that the Tory beliefs of strong commitment to the local community, traditional family values, the work ethic, enterprise and regular churchgoing are alive and well.

They are represented in the belief and practice of John Randall, the Conservative victor in yesterday's Uxbridge by-election, and were no doubt recognised and applauded as such by the electors of Uxbridge.

Yours faithfully,  
ANDREW E. A. SELOUS,  
52 Kyrle Road, SW1,  
August 1.

### Brass eagles

From the Reverend Charles Robertson

Sir, As minister of Canongate Kirk (The Kirk of Holyroodhouse), I have more than a passing interest in the pre-Reformation brass eagle lectern removed from St Stephen's Church, St Albans in 1985 (letter, July 29).

The lectern originally stood in the nave of Holyrood Abbey (which served as the parish church for Canongate), but was looted from there in 1544 and installed in St Stephen's Church. There is a strong case for claiming it as belonging still to the parish church of Canongate.

The time has come for the eagle to be released from its present secret location and allowed to wing its way homeward to its proper place and use in the parish kirk of Canongate. I look forward to the day when I can vary our customary Call to Divine Worship with the words: "The eagle has landed. Let us worship God."

I have the honour to remain, Sir, yours faithfully,

CHARLES ROBERTSON,  
Minister of Canongate,  
Edinburgh EH8 3BR.

### Here is thy sting

From Mr Jeremy Billingham

Sir, In the light of recent coverage on the subject of euthanasia, readers of pensionable age living on the Kent/Sussex border should know of a service currently advertised in our local newspaper, *The Courier*:

Wasps nests destroyed ..... £20  
O.A.P.s ..... £15

Yours faithfully,  
JEREMY BILLINGHAM,  
The Jetty House, 3 The Acoms,  
Stonegate, Wadhurst, East Sussex,  
July 20.







# SVYATOSLAV RICHTER

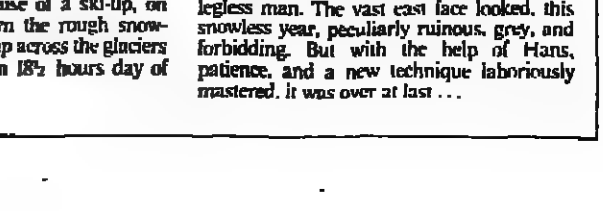
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which they will be  
benefit from the benefit of any  
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29 July 1997  
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Director

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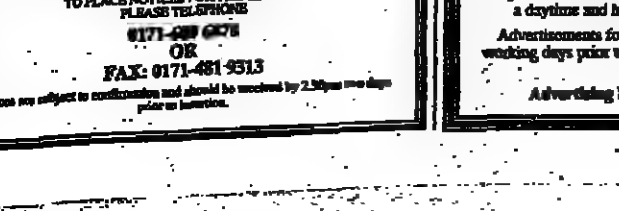
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light; and in that year a kindly older mountaineer took me on the Alps, after 13 years' absence. Our expeditions of increasing length. I felt that the fatigue or exhaustion was

possible for me by the time which I was towed down the rapids. A few hours' travel to the Riffelalp ended my continuous going.



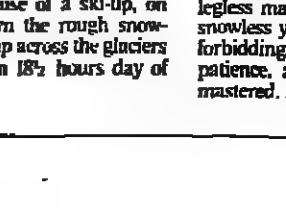
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possible for me by which I was towed rapids. A few hours' to the Riffelalp ended continuous going.



The vast east face looked, this  
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But with the help of Hans,  
d a new technique laboriously  
was over at last . . .

prove their debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice, or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts are proved.  
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Dated 29 July 1997  
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For a number of years after the War I was engaged in subdividing the counter-workings of this prop — for actively helpful it can never be — and experimenting with it upon British hills. By 1927, I had produced a version, moderately tame and sufficiently strong, and slight; and in that year a kindly conspiracy of younger mountaineers took me out again to the Alps, after 13 years' absence. On training expeditions of increasing length I discovered

thought to have felt physically after a few hours' climbing were no more than the suggestions of that mental or nervous boredom with arrhythmic movement which is the worst enemy of the limless. Finally, Mr. Claude A. Elliott, with the great guide Franz Lochmanier, and a magnificent second in Hans Brantschen, took me up Monte Rosa in none too easy snow conditions. The descent of the thigh-deep snow plateaux was only made possible for me by the use of a ski-tip, on which I was towed down the rough snow-rapids. A few hours' tramp across the glaciers in the Riffaio ended an 18½-hour day of

A day later, a bath in the Findelen Lake determined me to finish the season with the Masterhörn. Mr. Elliott had gone off to do the Vintersegel of the Dent Basse (in record time), so I engaged an old friend, Brantschen, and another. The mule ride up to the little Belvedere refuge was exceeding perilous. After a rest we started at 10 pm. — We were dispensed with a lantern. Hans helping me to climb, with a stick and aoulder and the guiding my meal peg in its foothold, I was in the presence of a chess-player moving a pawn. Precision of the lights of following parties showed in the darkness far below. By the Shoulder — this year a rubble and not a snow slope — most of them had caught us up. We were on the precipices of the great Hens, battling with the wind, and the snow had piled (all but the last) upon the summit at 7.30 am. — And then came the long terrors of the grim descent — always worse than the ascent for the less leg man. The vast cast face looked, this snowless year, peculiarly ruinous, grey, and forbidding. But with the help of Hans,







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BUSINESS EDITOR: Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY AUGUST 2 1997

## Sterling up after Davies talks of rate rise

By George Sivil

HOWARD DAVIES, who stepped down as Deputy Governor of the Bank of England on Thursday, said yesterday that a further "modest" rise in interest rates may be needed. His comments helped to lift the pound three pence to DM3.0385 at the close.

Mr Davies said, however, that an interest rate rise would not necessarily mean the pound going up. He believes that further rises in sterling will depend instead on the European single currency and the pound's status as a safe haven against the possibility of a weak euro.

He was speaking as figures showed that manufacturing grew for the 14th successive month. The purchasing managers' index, compiled by the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply, registered 53.4 in July, a slight drop from 53.5 in June.

New export orders, however, fell sharply in July to 47.1, from 51.7 in June, showing the first decline in export demand since the index began in January 1996.

Peter Thomson, for the institute, said: "This is the first month that purchasing managers have reported a significant drop in export orders, which they attribute almost entirely to the strength of sterling. The manufacturing sector remains strong, but the decline in demand from overseas markets is clearly having an effect."

Wall Street fell sharply as the US jobs rate dropped to a 24-year low of 4.8 per cent, raising fears of inflation. The Dow Jones industrial average was down 18.23, at 8,104.38, at midday.

## Energy bid referral leaves City stunned

By Paul Durman

MARGARET BECKETT, the President of the Board of Trade, stunned the City yesterday when she asked the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to investigate the £3.65 billion takeover of the Energy Group, the owner of Eastern Electricity.

The move is expected to herald tougher regulation of the electricity groups that have already been taken over, seven of them by US companies.

Mrs Beckett made her decision in spite of advice from the Office of Fair Trading and the electricity regulator that the bid from PacifiCorp, the US group, should be allowed to proceed, subject to various assurances. Mrs Beckett said she was not convinced that such assurances would be sufficient to address her concerns "over whether it will be possible to maintain adequate regulatory control over the merged company".

Eastern Electricity was set to become the eighth regional electricity company to pass into American ownership, but it is the first of the US takeovers to be referred to the MMC. The offer for Energy, which was demerged from Hanson this year, is also the first electricity takeover subject to the scrutiny of the Labour Government.

It is understood that Mrs Beckett wants this opportunity to "examine whether Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, can still exercise control over electricity companies when they become part of larger international groups. There is concern that they may be able to disguise the true nature of their financial position so as to avoid the regulator's acceptance of their price controls."

It is also believed that Mrs Beckett may be worried about the financial structure of the PacifiCorp bid, which initially will have almost £10 billion of debt after the purchase of Energy. The importance of these concerns was highlighted in *The Times* by Dieter Helm, the



Derek Bonham was "surprised and disappointed" by Margaret Beckett's decision

Oxford University economist and respected commentator on the energy industry. Energy's shares fell 27p, to 624p, after the referral of the PacifiCorp bid, which automatically lapses. More than 61 per cent of Energy's shareholders had accepted the 600p share offer.

chairman, said: "We are surprised and disappointed... particularly as PacifiCorp indicated its willingness to comply with all assurances required by the UK regulatory authorities." Energy and PacifiCorp both said they would co-operate with the MMC inquiry, which has to report by November 21.

The referral again raised concerns about the clarity of UK competition policy. In June, Mrs Beckett told businessmen that decisions on referrals "will be taken on competition grounds. This will be the primary consideration in merger referrals".

Tempus, page 26

## NatWest insider to run split division

By Robert Miller

NATWEST Group yesterday revealed that the result of the review of NatWest Markets, its troubled investment banking business, would be to split the business into two and appoint an insider as the new chief executive.

Konrad "Chip" Kruger, a US citizen who is currently co-chief executive of global debt markets, is to take the position vacated when Martin Owen resigned in June. Mr Kruger, 44, joined NatWest after the bank bought Greenwich Capital, the US securities firm, last October.

Derek Wanless, chief executive of NatWest Group, who took over the reins after Mr Owen's departure, will become chairman of NWM. The business was rocked by the discovery of a net £77 million black hole in the interest options book back in March.

Under the new look, NWM Global Financial Markets will become a new sector within the banking group, under the charge of Stefan Harris and will concentrate on Treasury, foreign exchange, interest rate trading, money markets and currency options. The rest of NWM will focus on investment banking activities, which include global equities, debt markets and international advisory work.

Under the reorganisation, NatWest will cut the capital allocated to NWM by as much as a third.

Mr Wanless said that a firm of headhunters had been appointed to assist in the search for a new NWM chief executive but added that Mr Kruger was the best candidate.

Simon Robertson, the former Kleinwort Benson chief now headed for Goldman Sachs, and Sir Andrew Large, who retired on Thursday as chairman of the Securities and Investments Board, were rumoured to have been candidates.

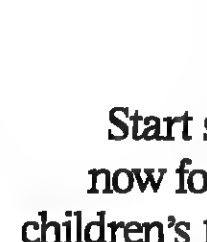
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Nikkei 19804.38 (-87.05)  
New York 8104.38 (-118.23)  
Dow Jones 8104.38 (-118.23)  
S&P Composite 1099.25 (-15.04)

Federal Funds 5.25% (5.25)  
Long Bond 102.1/4 (104.1/4)  
Yield 6.62% (6.80%)

3-month Interbank 7.1/4% (7.1/4%)  
Little long gilt 11.4/4% (11.5/4%)  
Future (Sep) 11.4/4% (11.5/4%)

New York 1.6353 (1.6404)  
London 1.6370 (1.6378)  
S 1.6384 (1.6377)  
DM 1.6380 (1.6380)  
SF 2.4880 (2.4781)  
Yen 193.25 (193.88)  
S Index 106.3 (104.8)

Tokyo close Yen 118.00  
Brent 15-day (Oct) \$18.90 (\$18.95)  
London close \$324.05 (\$325.05)  
\* denotes midday trading price

Unilever cash  
Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch consumer goods giant, is hunting hard for targets for its cash pile. Page 24

## Acquisition hopes and profits lift Lloyds TSB

By Robert Miller  
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

SHARES in Lloyds TSB soared after the banking group revealed record half-year results and lifted its dividend by 26 per cent.

The share price rose 60p to close at 736p as the market warmed to the possibility of further acquisitions by Lloyds TSB, funded by a war chest of nearly £1 billion. The favoured targets are likely to be a life insurer, a building society or the mortgage book of another bank.

Sir Brian Pitman, chairman of Lloyds TSB, said: "There are certainly some possibilities but they would have to be fairly sizeable." However, he ruled out any return to the investment banking business, which Lloyds TSB closed nearly a decade ago.

The group saw pre-tax profits rise by 33 per cent to £1.5 billion in the six months to June 30, excluding a £58 million writedown of finance leases. The 26 per cent rise in



Pitman: "possibilities"

the interim dividend, payable on October 10, to 5.3p was helped by a huge jump of 49 per cent in earnings per share to 20.4p.

Total income rose by 7 per cent to £3.6 billion. The group set aside an additional £50 million provision arising from the pensions mis-selling scandal. This brings the total compensation pot for Lloyds

TSB group, including Lloyds Abbey Life, to £250 million.

Of the main Lloyds TSB businesses, retail banking contributed pre-tax profits of £441 million against £307 million last time. Mortgages, now sold exclusively under the Cheltenham & Gloucester banner, were up £45 million to £293 million and net new lending grew by 29 per cent to £1.8 billion.

Insurance profits were down £11 million to £228 million partly as a result of the acquisition of the minority shareholdings in Lloyds Abbey Life in December 1996 as well as the additional compensation for pensions mis-selling.

On the international side of Lloyds TSB, which encompasses operations in Latin America, New Zealand and continental Europe, pre-tax profits rose by £20 million to £185 million with the emerging markets debt division contributing £84 million.

Tempus, page 26

## Tube users to be billed at home

By Jason Nishe

TUBE and bus travellers in London will be able to load up "smartcard" tickets with cash before their journeys or be billed at home for their fares under a new £1 billion ticketing scheme to be installed by London Transport.

A deal in principle has been agreed with TransSys, a consortium led by ICL and EDS, which will invest £180 million to install the new smartcard system in exchange for a 17-year contract worth up to £1 billion. A final contract is due to be signed in October and the system should be operating by the end of 2000.

Iain Coucher, managing director of TransSys, says the system, using plastic cards with silicon chips, will be among the most advanced in the world, cutting fraud and relieving travellers of the need to either buy season tickets in advance or carry change for ticket machines.

TransSys hopes to extend the system to taxi fares.

## Virgin to launch hotels in the sky

By Jon Ashworth

RICHARD BRANSON'S Virgin Atlantic Airways is planning to offer travellers double beds in private rooms, pubs, showers and exercise facilities on its new generation of Airbus A340s, which it has ordered in a £1.6 billion expansion.

The aircraft, quieter and larger than Virgin's existing A340s and powered by Rolls-Royce Trent 500 engines, will go into service in 2002 on routes to the West Coast of America and the Far East. They

will carry up to 375 passengers each, competing with the Boeing 777 in range and capacity.

Virgin has ordered 16 of the new A340-600s and two additional A340-300s in an order worth £1.6 billion. It will be the first airline to take delivery of the enlarged aircraft, which made their debut at the Le Bourget airshow in June.

Attacking the planned link between Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, Mr Branson said: "We are proud to become the launch customer for this predomi-

nantly British-made wide-bodied aircraft, which will carry the Union Jack around the globe. Boeing make excellent aircraft, but it is in the interest of both the aircraft industry and the consumer for them to have a strong competitor."

Mr Branson added: "It is healthy to see a European manufacturer and a British engine maker giving their American counterparts a serious run for their money."

The orders will virtually double the size of the Virgin fleet.

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## Arjo says pound has hit sales

Arjo Wiggins Appleton, the Anglo-French paper producer, yesterday blamed the strong pound for an 11.6 per cent slump in its sales, from £186 billion to £164 billion, in the six months to June 30.

The company, which employs 18,000 people and has operations in North America and Europe, said that if exchange rates had been constant, second-quarter turnover would have risen.

A spokesman said: "There has been an increase in the volume of sales although average prices are lower. The latest bad figures fuelled speculation that the company is about to merge with a rival. Although Arjo emphasises the negative effect of sterling's strength, it admits that pulp — bought in dollars or euros — is significantly cheaper than last year."

## BPP ahead

Britain's rapidly growing economy has led to a surge in people taking part-time private training courses to become white-collar professionals, says BPP, the training and publishing group. BPP saw a 22 per cent rise in pre-tax profits before exceptional items, to £5.5 million, in the half year to June 30. Turnover grew by almost 8 per cent, to £38.1 million, with earnings per share before exceptional items up 24 per cent to 13p. A 5p interim dividend, up from 4p, is due on October 10.

## Raffles buys

Raffles Holdings, owner of Raffles Hotel in Singapore and Brown's Hotel in London, has paid £26.5 million for the landmark Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten in Hamburg. The 160-bedroom hotel was sold by Japan's Asahi Corporation through JLV Hotels and Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

## Beauty plan

Japan's largest beauty products company, Shiseido, is to expand overseas aggressively, aiming to be one of the top three cosmetics firms by 2005. L'Oréal, Procter & Gamble and Unilever are the current top three. Shiseido is fourth.

## Share split unveiled but plans for cash pile still a mystery

# Unilever price at five-year high

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

UNILEVER, the Anglo-Dutch consumer goods group, failed to offer further clues yesterday on how it will spend its £2.8 billion cash pile, as it unveiled higher than expected first-half profits and plans for a four-for-one share split.

The funds have been built up since it raised a net £2.58 billion from the sale last month of its specialty chemicals business to ICI. A spokesman said that Morris Tabakshat and Niall Fitzgerald, the co-chairmen, had

given themselves two years to decide how to invest the funds. "It is not Unilever's way to rush into anything," he said.

The group said the strength of sterling has knocked £50 million off net profits as reported at constant exchange rates in the first half, and is likely to knock off £70 million over the full year.

Pre-tax profit in the second quarter, excluding the specialty chemicals sale, rose 37 per cent, to £836 million. For the first half, pre-tax profit was 24 per cent ahead at £1.37 billion. The shares closed at a five-

year high of £18.21, up 52½p. The group announced yesterday that the London and Amsterdam-listed shares are to be split four ways on October 13, if the move is approved by extraordinary meetings on September 22. It last carried out a share split in 1987. The move aims to improve liquidity and tradability of the shares, which were below £13 a year ago.

The profit growth came from improvements in margins from cost-cutting and portfolio pruning, particularly in Europe, rather than in-

creased sales. Group margins rose from 8.8 to 10 per cent. Sales were ahead in North America, India and South East Asia. Central and Eastern European sales were strong but other European countries felt the impact of sales of non-core companies.

Poor weather in June pushed ice cream sales lower. For the half year, at constant rates of exchange, sales were ahead by 3 per cent to £16.8 billion. In the second quarter, sales were up 1 per cent, to £8.83 billion.

Mr Fitzgerald is not expecting overall economic condi-

tions to change materially in the second half. "Sales growth is likely to remain modest, in part due to continuing portfolio rationalisation. Although profits growth in the remainder of the year will be less buoyant, profit improvement for the full year should be satisfactory," he said.

The interim dividend will be announced with the third-quarter results in November. Earnings were boosted by the disposal profits and rose 310 per cent, to £0.19p a share.

Tempus, page 26

## Electronic exchange reveals £6m loss

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

TRADEPOINT, the electronic share exchange saved from bankruptcy by venture capitalists this week, has revealed the scale of its capital hemorrhage.

The order-driven trading system lost £6.09 million in its second year of operation, up from £5.07 million. Losses continued to rise in the three months to July at £1.64 million, up from £1.42 million for the same period last year. A total loss of £18.23 million is being carried forward.

Set up to rival the London Stock Exchange in September 1995, TradePoint remains minuscule in comparison. Last month, its best since launch, it handled £30.8 million of trades, alongside £221 billion for the Stock Exchange. It needs £50 million a day to break even but is used by only 64 institutional investors, 16 more than it had a year ago.

Michael Waller-Briggs, the chief executive who steps down in October as part of the £11.4 million refinancing led by Apax Partners and Electra Fleming, is confident the company will start making a profit by the end of the year.

As part of the deal, three of the four leading inter broker dealers in the City, who invested a total of £2.5 million, have signed with TradePoint. Stanislas Yassukovich, former deputy chairman of the Stock Exchange and chairman of Easdaq, is to join the board.

Tempus, page 26



Rising fast: Mike Darrington, managing director of Gregg's, celebrates a 24 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to a record £5.3 million for the half year to June 14. The shares rose 87½p to £18.62½ as the interim

dividend advanced 22 per cent, to 11p a share, out of earnings up 30 per cent, to 32.7p. The group holds net cash of £12.6 million. Meanwhile, a record £26 million capital spending programme is under way at Gregg's.

## Minister sets terms for Bupa takeover

By CLARE STEWART

BUPA, the private health insurer and hospital group, will have to sell a stake in the AIM-quoted Independent British Healthcare if its takeover of Goldborough Healthcare is to go ahead.

Nigel Griffiths, the Competition and Consumer Affairs Minister, yesterday announced that the £77 million deal would be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission unless Bupa met certain undertakings.

Bupa's acquisition of Goldborough includes control of nearly 21 per cent of Independent British Healthcare, an operator with 11 private hospitals. The deal, Mr Griffiths said, "gives rise to competition concerns in relation to the market for private hospital beds". These concerns "might be addressed" if Bupa undertook to sell the stake in IBH.

Bupa said it would be working with the Director-General of Fair Trading and the DTI to meet the requirements "as soon as possible".

Bupa's 175p cash offer for Goldborough has now received acceptances in respect of 96.9 per cent of the shares. The merger will mean the combined group will have 35 hospitals and 76 nursing homes. Concern over the deal has been raised because of Bupa's enlarged share of the healthcare market and over its influence as both a healthcare provider and a customer through its insurance arm.

The OFT has extended its consultancy period on the bid until August 22. Paul Sayer, an analyst at Laing & Buisson, said this would give smaller operators in the market opposed to the merger time to voice their views.

Goldborough shares closed down ½p at 170½p, and IBH up 6p at 82½p.

## Blot on Bic takeover hopes

By CLARE STEWART

MARRIAGE plans between Bic ballpoints and Sheaffer fountain pens may have to be rewritten even before the ink is dry on the page.

Two top executives of the American Sheaffer group look certain to launch a management buyout to try to block the advances of the French-listed Société Bic.

Owen Jones, Sheaffer's chief executive, and Shane Dolan, chief financial officer, are considering whether to exercise their right of refusal to buy the company, Martin

Bolland, a partner in Alchemy Partners, the venture capital group, which has promised to support a buyout, said: "We are still studying the Bic offer, but there is a high probability that this right will be exercised."

A firm decision on any management buyout would be made over the next few weeks Mr Bolland said. Alchemy Partners is headed by Jon Moulton, who was involved in the Parker Pen buyout in 1985.

Bic is believed to be offering a price that is below the

Sheaffer group's annual sales of \$50 million (£30 million). Since 1987, the loss-making Sheaffer has been owned by Gefinor, a merchant bank listed in Luxembourg.

The action by Bic, best known for its low-cost pens and disposable razors and lighters, is seen as a move into more upmarket areas. It follows recent acquisitions such as those of the Hausser pens and Tipp-Ex correcting fluid business.

Sheaffer, which is based in Iowa, has 550 employees

worldwide and was founded in 1913 by Walter A. Sheaffer, inventor of "the first practical self-filling fountain pen".

The group's products, which include fountain pens, rollerballs and pencils, retail for between £4.95 and £320 and are stocked by a wide range of retailers, including Harrods, Selfridges, WH Smith and Rymans.

Société Bic reported 1996 sales of \$1.2 billion, and, as well as its French base, has operations in north and central America.

## TOURIST RATES

Bank	Bank	Bank	Bank
Sells	Sells	Sells	Sells
Australia \$ ... 2.32	Malta ... 0.587	Bank	0.628
Austria Sch ... 22.36	Netherlands Gld ... 3.806	Buy	3.313
Belgium Fr ... 65.83	New Zealand \$ ... 2.70		2.48
Canada \$ ... 2.353	Norway Kr ... 13.15		12.21
Cyprus Cyp£ ... 0.832	Portugal Esc ... 319.53		287.50
Denmark Kr ... 12.15	S Africa Rd ... 8.30		7.34
Finland Mk ... 5.62	Spain Ptas ... 267.23		248.50
France Fr ... 10.69	Sweden Kr ... 13.97		12.87
Germany Dm ... 3.20	Switzerland Fr ... 2.54		2.42
Greece Dr ... 489	Turkey Lira ... 2721.63		2522.81
Hong Kong \$ ... 13.46	USA \$ ... 1.743		1.589
Iceland ... 127			
Ireland P ... 1.18			
Israel Shk ... 5.10			
Italy Lira ... 3138			
Japan Yen ... 208.43			

Rates for small denomination bank notes supplied by Barclays Bank. Other rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

## WATERFALL HOLDINGS PLC ("Waterfall")

Beeson Gregory Limited, nominated adviser, financial adviser and joint broker to Waterfall announced on 15 July 1997 on behalf of Waterfall that the recent rights issue which it had underwritten, had become unconditional in all respects and that applications had been made by shareholders for some 3.33m shares being 43% of the shares available for subscription. The rights issue was of 7,735,768 shares.

Included within the rights issue were 1,839,834 shares which Beeson Gregory Limited had placed firm on behalf of a substantial shareholder. Owing to an administrative error, this figure of 1,839,834 shares was inadvertently omitted from the announcement of shares taken up under the rights issue.

Consequently, the total percentage of the rights issue taken up was some 67.2 per cent of the issue (5.2m shares) and not 43 per cent as earlier announced. This administrative error was not caused by Waterfall or its directors. As a result of this error there was an over-allocation of shares to sub-underwriters, but the position with sub-underwriters has now largely been resolved by Beeson Gregory.

This announcement appears as a matter of record only.

Beeson Gregory Limited

## BUSINESS ROUNDUP

## Retail boost signals windfall spending

JOHN LEWIS provided further evidence of a consumer boom yesterday as it ended its half year on a high note, with sales on the rise at both its department stores and at its Waitrose supermarket chain. The department stores reported that big ticket items, such as furnishings and electrical appliances, were selling best in late July. This supports what Dixons, the electrical retailer, and Allied Carpets have been saying about customers dipping into windfall payments.

In the 26 weeks to July 26, sales at department stores were up 10.7 per cent. In the final week of the half year they were up 13.6 per cent. In the same period at Waitrose, sales were up 4.7 per cent, with a 5.9 per cent rise in the final week. Total group sales increased 7.3 per cent in the first half, with 9.6 per cent seen in the last week.

## Premier in the red

PREMIER, the healthcare group whose shares remain suspended at 15p, yesterday announced that it had incurred full year pre-tax losses of £1.124 million, against a profit of £1.1 million for the year to December. The loss per share reached 14.7p, against earnings of 15.1p last time. Again, there is no dividend. Premier says that if shareholders vote to approve the planned disposal of its US business it will not need to turn to alternative sources of finance. However, such a course of action will be needed in the event of there being no approval.

## Hansom disposal

HANSOM'S Richmond Road Cab Centre subsidiary is to sell its taxi meter rental business, which trades as Taxitronic, to Interfacom, the Barcelona-based supplier of its taxi meters. The price is £230,000, payable over five years, which will be used for working capital. Richmond Road Cabs has agreed with Interfacom for its wholly owned subsidiary, Taxitronic, to sublet part of its premises at Richmond Road, Hackney, where it will continue the business of renting taxi meters. In the year to March 31, Taxitronic made pre-tax profit of £20,570.

## BPB's sterling warning

BPB, the building materials group, said that an improvement in profitability during the year to date had been offset by the impact of sterling's strength on overseas earnings, which may hit full-year profits by just under £20 million. The warning left the shares 6½p lower at 329p. Alan Turner, the chairman, told the annual meeting that strong volume growth in sales of plasterboard products achieved last year continued into the first quarter, with building plaster demand also higher in many countries.

## Kellogg beats estimates

KELLOGG said that its net income more than doubled in the second quarter, sailing past Wall Street estimates, and driving up the cereal giant's shares. Kellogg said gains in its share of the US cereal market helped to push earnings to \$163.6 million (£100.4 million), or 79 cents a share, in the quarter. The returns easily outpaced profits of \$78.1 million in the same period last year, when a price war hit Kellogg's bottom line. The shares surged 437 cents to \$96.25.

## Landround's £3.6m tag

LANDROUND, a provider of travel-based promotions, is seeking an Alternative Investment Market listing through a placing of 625,000 ordinary shares of 5p each, at 80p a share, raising £365,000. The placing capitalises Landround at £3.6 million. First dealings in the shares are expected on August 13. The issue's broker is W H Ireland. Landround provides promotions for clients such as Adidas and Dixons. It reported pre-tax profits of £362,000 in the year to September 30, 1996.

## Paramount bid threat

THE bidder for Paramount Foods threatened yesterday to call off its efforts unless the food producer provides what is described as "appropriate information" to determine whether an acceptable offer could be made. Harry, Ian and Lester Kent, the founders, former directors and current 17.3 per cent shareholders of Paramount, confirmed that they made the anonymous approach on May 12 but since that date had still not been put in a position to formulate an offer.

## THE SUNDAY TIMES

## Civil war at NatWest

NatWest has made it clear it intends reducing the amount of capital it devotes to investment banking, and the scramble for resources was fierce. "There were more begging bowls at 135 Bishopsgate than there are in the Strand," said one NatWest insider...

Business, The Sunday Times tomorrow

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هكذا من الأصل



## A WORKING WEEK FOR: JOHN HENDRICKS

## A hometown boy with global vision

Eric Reguly meets a media mogul poised to conquer the world in partnership with the BBC

Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday

THE American who is quietly transforming the BBC into a commercial operator on a global scale looks like an insurance salesman from the Midwest.

John Hendricks, the founder, chairman and chief executive of Discovery Communications, the documentary maker that has formed an international programming joint venture with the BBC, is short, sturdy and sports a wardrobe that positively shouts suburban shopping mall: stiff white shirt, a tie decorated with First World War aeroplanes and an expensive but otherwise ordinary jacket. He is friendly, laid-back and straightforward.

The whole effect is unsettling and raises suspicion. Here is a man who parlayed \$17,000 (£10,429) of his own money into a media company with an estimated worth of \$3.8 billion in little more than a decade. Now Discovery is investing more than \$500 million to make the BBC a household name around the world. A slick media shark is what you would expect; what you get instead is a hometown boy with whom you would gladly share a beer. "He is not your typical media type from Central Casting," says Adam Singer, chairman of Flextech, Britain's second-largest supplier of cable and satellite programming.

Discovery, based in Maryland, was launched in 1985 and has since become the world's largest producer of non-fiction programming, with every topic imaginable, including adventure, science, technology, medicine, nature, history and exploration. Its library includes documentaries on meerkats, "the most social of animals", mythical monsters from the Loch Ness monster to werewolves, forensic scientists, UFOs, classic racing cars, the Battle of the Bulge, air warfare, the psychology of fear, the development of women's badminton, killer jellyfish and sharks and dinosaurs galore.

Discovery is the only TV network devoted exclusively to documentaries and when it was launched in 1985 with *Jacobs Ladder* it was considered somewhat daffy and probably doomed. Documentaries implied learning, not recreation. You were forced to watch them at school and happily ignored them at home, with the possible exception of Jacques Cousteau's *Undersea World*. Singer says: "John's vision was the creation of channels that were purely documentaries — no sports, movies or news. Back then, and it wasn't too long ago, that was a pretty radical concept."

Hendricks fits the part. He loves science and nature and anything mechanical. He is taking flying lessons, not so that he can get to meetings faster, but because he is fascinated by flying. If he bought a plane it would be a bouncy little Cessna, not an intercontinental Gulfstream V, which he could easily afford. He is 45 and his hobbies seem suited to those of a young boy before he discovers girls. His pastime is fossil collecting and he has three sabre-tooth tiger skulls, one of which is 36 million years old. "It is absolutely amazing to touch something that old," he says.

Hendricks is a self-made man. He was

born the son of a house builder in a coal mining town in West Virginia, a perennial hard-luck state. "Our fortunes were tied to the housing market; we lived from house to house," he says.

When Hendricks was a kid, the family moved to Huntsville. NASA had chosen the Alabama city to build the Saturn moon rockets and the housing market was booming. So was Hendricks's imagination. "Huntsville was to play an important role in getting the first man on the moon," he says. "I always had an interest in space and aviation. I built a telescope when I was 12 years old."

At the University of Alabama, he read history, science and astronomy. Although he went on to become the school's director of community and government services, the seeds of his documentary business had already been planted. Hendricks noted that every time he wanted to see a documentary, he had to scour the university's decrepit library of 16mm films and set up a projector. "At the time, I thought 'why is this stuff not available on TV?'"

He suggested the idea to a local broadcaster, who dismissed it as fanciful, and to a cable company, which explained that under the current legislation cable companies could be distributors or content providers but not both.

The market changed radically in the mid-1970s when Time Inc (now Time Warner) challenged the restriction and

**'John's vision was the creation of channels that were purely documentaries. Back then that was a pretty radical concept'**

won. The victory meant that cable companies could acquire and make programmes as well as broadcast them. Dozens of cable-exclusive channels were launched, including Home Box Office and Ted Turner's CNN.

In 1982, fearing that one of the big players would soon snatch his documentary-for-the-masses idea, Hendricks started a company called the Cable Education Network. It had no product, no viewers and no money. He figured he needed \$25 million to start the service and began to recruit investors.

Tele-Communications Inc, America's biggest cable group, provided its financial might and bought a 49 per cent stake in Hendricks's tiny company. Cox Cable Communications and Newhouse Broadcasting, part of the company that owns *Vanity Fair* magazine, also stepped on board. Hendricks's equity was diluted to 3 per cent, but he had some of the most powerful names in the industry behind him.

The Cable Education Network name was jettisoned and replaced by the snappier Discovery. It had 152,000 subscribers by the time it finally made it to air in 1985. A year later there were seven million, and two years later there were 32 million. Discovery had become the fastest-growing cable network in history. Hendricks proved that fortunes could be made in the nerd market.

Discovery owed a lot of its early success to public service broadcasters around the world, including the BBC and the Canadian Broadcasting Corp, whose documentaries were bought for a small fraction of their production costs and shown on the Discovery channels. "A lot of our early programming had English, Australian and Canadian accents," Hendricks says. "We needed some American accents."

So in 1988 Discovery began producing its own programmes, including *The Second Russian Revolution*, a six-part series on the fall of Communism. Co-productions with the BBC became one of the driving forces of Discovery's original programming effort.

Having saturated the vast American market in only a few years, Discovery set its sights overseas. In 1989 Discovery Europe appeared. Other channels followed in Latin America, Canada, Africa and Asia. At last count, the company had 110 million subscribers in 145 countries and generated revenues of \$662 million in 1996. Merrill Lynch, the Wall Street investment house, has put a \$3.8 billion value on the privately held Discovery group.

Discovery has recently diversified into retailing, digital channels focusing on children, interactive media, Web sites and big-screen films. Its first feature movie, *The Leopard Son*, makes its premiere next month.

The BBC will fuel Discovery's next stage of growth. The BBC has impressive production capability and a rich but underexploited library. Hendricks realised some time ago that the BBC also had global ambitions and might attempt to flood the international market with high-quality, non-fiction programming of its own. Three years ago he met Bob Phillips, now the chief executive of BBC Worldwide, Auntie's commercial arm. "We were talking about working together globally to reduce the risks in nature and animal programming, rather than having two competing services."

A year ago, BBC Worldwide announced that it was in discussions to form two joint programming ventures, one with Discovery to cover the American and international markets, the other with Flextech, another Tele-Communications Inc affiliate, in the British market. For the BBC, the goal was to generate a robust stream of commercial income to offset the increasingly inadequate licence fee income. BBC Worldwide expects its various joint ventures to contribute more than £200 million a year to the BBC within a decade.

The much smaller Flextech joint venture is ready to go. The parallel Discovery joint venture is still under negotiation, but announced last month that its first two channels will start broadcasting in the autumn. Animal Planet, described as a "fun and features" channel, and the People and Arts Network will appear first in Discovery's Latin American markets and will eventually be broadcast globally.

Together, the BBC and Discovery form the most formidable non-fiction programming machine in the world. "Who can really compete with us?" says Hendricks. Discovery, with the BBC at its side, will no doubt go on to conquer new worlds. But Hendricks is not obsessed with the business. He is just as happy flying his little plane or admiring his fossil collection with his children.



John Hendricks parlayed \$17,000 of his own money into a media company with an estimated worth of \$3.8 billion

## Lloyds TSB Group results for the first half of 1997

"Lloyds TSB Group is pleased to report another strong set of results. Profit attributable to shareholders rose by 57 per cent; earnings per share were up by 49 per cent; and the interim dividend was increased by 26 per cent.

We are well placed to continue to deliver superior returns to shareholders."

Sir Brian Pitman, Chairman

	Half-year to 30 June 1997 (unaudited) £m	Half-year to 30 June 1996 £m	Half-year to 31 December 1996 £m
Profit before tax and write-down of finance leases	1,504	1,130	1,375
Write-down of finance leases	(58)	—	—
Profit before tax	1,446	1,130	1,375
Tax	356	372	414
Profit after tax	1,090	758	961
Minority interests	5	68	76
Profit attributable to shareholders	1,085	690	885
Dividends	283	214	478
Earnings per share	20.4p	13.7p	17.5p
Dividends per share	5.3p	4.2p	9.0p

Financial information for the year ended 31 December 1996 is based on the statutory accounts for 1996 which have been delivered to the registrar of companies. The auditors' report on these accounts was unqualified and did not include a statement under sections 237(2) or (3) of the Companies Act 1985.

The interim dividend of 5.3p per share will be paid on 10 October 1997 to shareholders registered on 15 August 1997. Shareholders who have completed a mandate under the share dividend scheme will receive new shares instead of the cash dividend.

Copies of the news release containing full details of the results may be obtained from Investor Relations, Lloyds TSB Group plc, 71 Lombard Street, London EC3P 3BS (telephone: 0171 356 1273).



## Fund runner

FOR a man perennially described as publicity shy, it must have been a dreadful week for Nicholas Roditi. First he's in the news because he's appointed his old chums Rupert Pennant-Rea and Derek Netherton to the board of investment trust Plantation & General. The next thing he knows he's "exposed" as earning £30 million a year, reinforcing his position as Britain's highest-paid man.

Since he had previously struggled along on an estimated £50 million, this is the equivalent of having received a pay rise of about £575,000 a week. Roditi runs the £1.8 billion Quantum Quota fund for George Soros. *Financial World*, the New York publication that first drew attention to Roditi, bases its estimates of his earnings on the "smashing 82 per cent" rise in the fund last year, after a 159 per cent rise in 1995.

Netherton, who began working with Roditi at Schroders nearly 30 years ago, says the true figure is proba-

bly known only to Roditi and Soros. "I haven't a clue," he adds. "I've never asked him and he's never told me." Whatever, Roditi, who sold his Hampshire "home" a few months ago for £1.5 million, is not short of a bob or two. Panmure Gordon clearly thinks he can afford the £1.5 million offer he has been forced to make for Plantation & General.

### At the helm

A SORRY tale reaches me from darkest Dorset. According to well-informed local sources, Cleaves Palmer, one of two brothers who run J C & R H Palmer, a highly successful brewery in Bournemouth, recently encountered a spot of bother when he took his motor cruiser for a spin off the Dorset coast. Palmer, a self-effacing fellow well known on the local party circuit, was enjoying the air when the engines spluttered to a halt, leaving him bobbing on the waves far from land. Thinking on his feet, Palmer whipped out his mobile phone, and dialled the coastguard. "Could we have your position, sir?", they asked. Palmer replied: "Sales and marketing director."

### Badgered

NICK DOAK, PR supremo at Lloyd's of London, whizzed off on holiday this week, taking with him a nifty badge, styled on the Lloyd's logo, with the inscription: "Liars of London." Is this the new face of Lloyd's? Has Doak come clean? Not a bit of it. The badge, it emerges, is the work of Sally Noel, the former 60s model-turned-Lloyd's



campaigner, who sent out dozens of them with the compliments of "The Angry Ladies of Lloyd's". One even found its way to Philip Holden, who has the task of bankrupting thousands of non-paying names. He has issued over 1,400 writs and obtained 223 judgments so far and will be interested in the inscription on the back which says the badges were assembled by the homeless.

● STILL at Lime Street, the latest Lloyd's disciplinary notices detail the shocking case of John Lee Summerfield, a former deputy claims manager with a Lloyd's syndicate specialising in motor insurance. Summerfield's duties included dealing with stolen and recovered vehicles. Cutting a long story short, Summerfield "diverted" a couple of cars on which claims had been paid, kept one for himself, and registered the other in the name of his wife. Someone found out. Summerfield lost his job, and Lloyd's has imposed a formal censure, plus costs of £2,000.

### Buoy zone

ACHING limbs across the City this week, as venture cap-

italists, television executives, insolvency practitioners and other luminaries recover from that great annual summer bash, the Biddle & Co waterski day, held at Thorpe Park in Surrey.

Martin Winter, senior partner of the Gresham Street law firm, excelled yet again by inviting almost as many children as adults — 38 potential litigants in all.

While the urbane Roger Fink, a Biddle partner, carved up the waters at Paul Seaton's ski school, the star turn belonged to five-year-old Amelia Winter, who followed her father's example by skiing a round or two, sending the resident ducks scattering. Winter and his wife, Hilary, a partner in Goudens, another firm of solicitors, spend most of their weekends at Thorpe Ski, and regularly compete in the national championships. Amelia, meanwhile, is clearly destined for greater things. "When can I go round the buoys?" she was heard to proclaim — to which a nervous Winter added to all in earshot: "She means slalom buoys, not boys." Lawyers for you.

JON ASHWORTH



Martin Winter organised the Thorpe Park event









## DOUBLE TROUBLE 29

The couple who were gazumped twice in a row

## WEEKEND MONEY

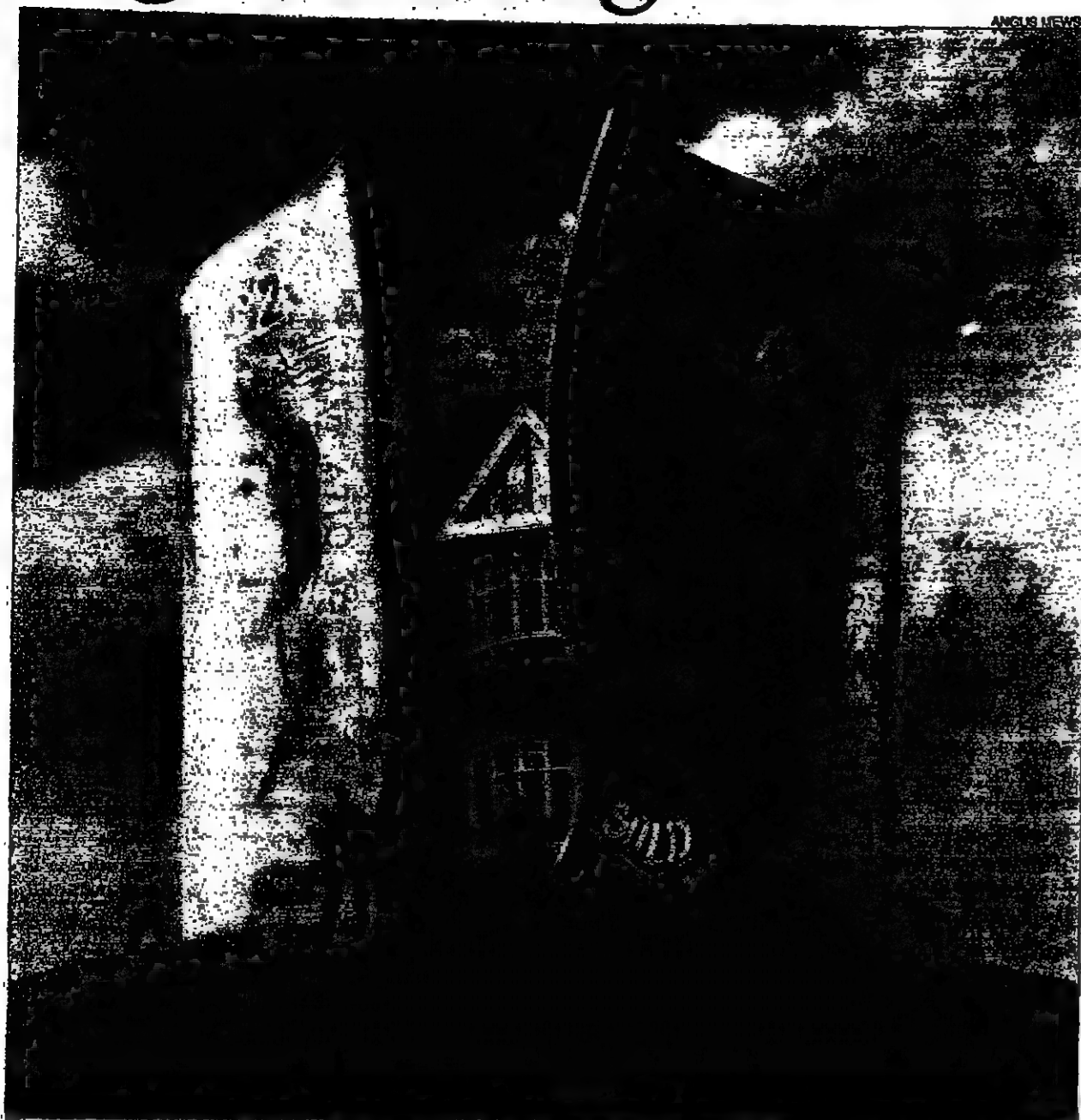
## TAX EFFICIENT 30

A satisfied customer of the Revenue

## THE TIMES: PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Sara McConnell says tardy lenders and local authorities are accused of causing longest delays

## Agents urge action to end gazumping



State agents this week accused lenders and local authorities of opening the way to gazumpers by failing to turn round mortgage applications and searches quickly enough and causing long delays in house-buying.

Writing back at critics who accuse estate agents of encouraging gazumping — rejecting an accepted offer in favour of a higher one — estate agents called on the Government to compel lenders to process mortgage applications in two weeks and to "sort out" local authorities.

Lorna Vestey, a partner at Knight Frank, the international estate agent, said: "Lenders lack a culture of urgency and need to polish up their act. The same applies to local authorities. Solicitors can exchange contracts in hours if everything is there." She warned the longer the delay, the more opportunity sellers have to gazump.

Her criticisms come as ministers prepare to hold the first of a series of meetings next week to establish ground rules for a review of the house buying system in England and Wales. It will include proposals to stamp out gazumping and will monitor several cases, focusing on the role of solicitors, agents, lenders, the causes of delays and costs of conveyancing.

The Government pledged in its election manifesto to tackle gazumping, which has returned particularly in London and the South East. Frustrated buyers have spent hundreds of pounds on valuations and legal fees only to find they have been passed over because another buyer is offering more. Agents say they are legally bound to pass on all

## THE REAL COST OF MOVING

Before buyers can exchange contracts and be certain of their property, they have to spend money on:

- A valuation or survey. Lenders charge a fixed fee for a basic valuation. On a £100,000 three-bed semi this would be £120. A housebuyer's report would be £250-VAT and full survey £350-VAT.
- A local authority search. Local authorities can charge what they like. On a £100,000 property, the average is £91.
- Legal fees. These vary by region and cost of property. Gazumped buyers must pay for work already done. Quotes ranged from £190 to £351 across the country for buying a £75,000 house in Cumbria.
- Mortgage set-up fees. Securing a fixed-rate or discount deal costs about £250. Some booking fees are non-refundable if gazumped. Others are payable on completion and refundable if the deal falls.

Buyers who do exchange contracts will also have to pay:

- Land Registry fees for transferring the property into their name. These range from £40 for properties up to £30,000 to £1,800 for properties of £500,000 or more.
- Stamp duty. Levied at 1 per cent of properties over £60,000, 1.5 per cent over £250,000 and 2 per cent over £500,000. Save money by negotiating a lower price and buying fixtures and fittings separately.
- Removal costs. These vary from £188 on average for moving from a ground floor one bedroom flat to £530 for removal from a five bedroom detached house. Costs in Yorkshire & Humberside are half those in London.

Sellers will also have to pay:

- Agents' fees. These range on average from £778 on a £25,000 property to £4,174 on a £200,000 home. Figures are for sole agency. Sources: Woolwich, Cumbria Trading Standards, RICS, London & Country Mortgages, Land Registry

offers and claim they do not encourage gazumping.

Under the current system, neither side is bound by any agreement in England and Wales until contracts have been exchanged. It can often take months between making an offer and exchanging contracts. The Government is considering compelling buyers and sellers to put down a deposit, maybe 5 per cent of purchase price, which either side would forfeit by backing out without good reason and

which would cover the "wronged" party's legal costs.

Such agreements have long been championed by the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA).

But Hugh Dunsmore-Hardy, NAEA chief executive, said a contract alone would not end gazumping. "It would pay compensation to cover legal costs incurred before gazumping or gazundering — where a buyer backs out if the seller refuses to lower the price."

He argues that gazumping

is just one of the most painful and visible results of an inefficient system where everyone sits back and waits for someone else to act. He said: "One cog slowing down slows down all the others. There are inherent delays in the system."

Mr Dunsmore-Hardy echoed Mrs Vestey's call for mortgage lenders to review their systems and said more lenders should adopt the practice of issuing mortgage certificates showing that they were prepared to lend a certain amount on principle.

The Council of Mortgage Lenders agreed that lenders could do more but argued that they were not the biggest cause of delay. "The big problem is chains and finding a way to break them". CML rejected accusations that lenders lacked urgency. "We've found there is a real culture of competition".

Determined gazumpers will not be deterred by threats of compensation for legal costs, particularly in London where property is in short supply and buyers will pay high prices. But you can speed the buying process to cut the likelihood of being gazumped.

■ Get a loan organised before you find a property. Give lenders all the necessary documents including payslips, accounts and references.

■ Contact a solicitor before seeking a property and tell them you want to move fast when you find a place to buy.

■ If there are delays on local authority searches ask if you can do a personal search.

■ Do not assume everyone works flat out for you. Ask constantly about progress.

Twice gazumped, page 29

WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

English and Welsh housebuyers, seething at delays and gazumping, have long cast envious looks over the border where Scots sign on the dotted line when their offer is accepted.

Earlier this year ministers briefly flirted with extending the Scottish system to the rest of the UK. But the grass is not always greener, say those who have to operate under the Scottish system. There can be a lot of expense, and stress before the deal is done.

Under the Scottish system buyers declare their interest in a property through a "note of interest" to the agent. They are then told the closing date by which offers must be received. Before the closing date they have to arrange and pay for surveys and searches on the property. Often there is no fixed price and buyers are bidding in the dark against rivals. If their offer is accepted, it becomes binding and there is a "conclusion of

## Scottish and US systems have their flaws too

missives" (exchange of contracts).

But the system has two big disadvantages. If a bid fails, buyers will have spent money on searches and surveys for nothing. Even if the bid succeeds, buyers who have not yet sold their existing property may have to take out an expensive bridging loan. According to the National Association of Estate Agents, gazumping is still possible.

Other critics of the English system look to the US where buyers and sellers also sign binding contracts as soon as the offer is made. Real estate agents have to be qualified

and licensed by their state regulator. Most of them have access to Multiple Listing Services, databases of property on the market locally and nationwide. This saves the familiar trudge up and down the high street at home.

Once a seller has accepted the offer, buyers immediately sign a contract, normally in the realtor's office. They then pay a deposit of roughly 10 per cent of the purchase price into an escrow account held by a bank or other regulated body. Escrow accounts are bonded under federal law so that buyers can get their money back if anything goes wrong.

The contract specifies a closing date (completion date) in the same way as in the UK. Standard contracts contain let-out clauses in case of problems over loans or structural faults in the property.

But there are some danger areas for buyers, said Ben Stagg, partner in Goldschmidt & Howland, the London agent and a qualified California real estate salesman. Not doing a thorough title search before buying could mean unpaid loans emerge that were secured on the property by previous owners.

Mr Stagg said: "I have known deals where loans were outstanding months after someone moved in. Title searches are complex because all loans have to be searched to check there is nothing outstanding". Most US mortgage lenders demand title insurance, which pays out if the seller does not have good title.

SARA MCCONNELL

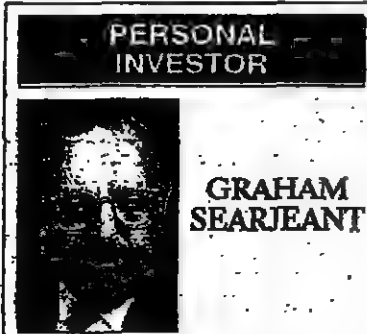
## BT is stuck on the hook

Just as members of British Telecom's two million legion of shareholders thought we could relax, things are going wrong again. The group's fraught talks with MCI, its American partner, are going round in ever-increasing circles. Uncertainty is here to stay, whether the merger first agreed last November goes ahead, is renegotiated or even aborted.

From the election to the Budget, BT shares suffered agonies over the windfall tax, which might have cost nothing if based on returns or billions if based on size. On the formula chosen, the impost on BT was somewhere down the middle, causing much relief. BT shares shot up 10 per cent. Since MCI's unbudgeted troubles unfolded a week later, they have fallen 15 per cent, or £5 billion.

Efforts have been made to justify that fall by cold calculation. Friends in the City want to give BT ammunition to renegotiate its generous offer for America's second biggest long-distance telephone company. Clever as the sums are, however, they do not add up. Essentially, MCI is losing about £250 million a year more than expected trying to break into protected markets of the vast local US monopolies that can now attack its markets. The fall in BT shares echoes the patter of cold feet in the City, lumbering up to run away from the deal.

Worrying as this is, the MCI adventure has to be seen in the wider and scarcely sunnier context of BT's fortunes. These are reflected in its share price, which is about the same as four years ago and was mostly lower in between. By comparison, the FTSE 100



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

share index has risen about 70 per cent over the period, as have shares in rival Cable & Wireless group.

This stagnation is the work of Ofcom. BT's domestic regulator has forced ever sharper price cuts on BT's UK utility business, while at the same time doing everything it can to encourage competitors and to prevent BT from responding. Even in a growing market, the twin pressures of falling prices and falling market share are now showing.

In the first quarter of BT's new financial year, turnover and profits were flat, even though the volume of international and domestic telephone calls was up about 8 per cent on a year ago. And competitors cut BT's residential lines at an annual rate of 2½ per cent.

These twin pressures will continue. Quite simply, if BT does much better, its regulator will think he has failed and impose harsher measures. No wonder BT shares yield twice the FTSE average. This is not an acceptable prospect for

shareholders, or for any competent, reasonably ambitious management. To get out of this bind, BT has to go abroad and become predator rather than incumbent. This is a far riskier business even than competing with BT at home. On the Continent and, as it turns out, in America, the playing field is not tilted to help newcomers as in Britain. They must toil uphill facing volleys of arrows from castles commanding the high ground. But there is a consensus that telecoms, like airlines, will end up as a global market dominated by a few competitors. BT virtually has to join in.

MCI, having grown big in America attacking AT&T's long-distance monopoly, looked an ideal partner to help to take on the rest of the world. But an MCI/BT merger was always going to be difficult. And BT was warned by observers of the US market that MCI was in trouble in its core business, let alone its new one.

BT's culture is diametrically different from MCI's. Indeed, the merger may in part have arisen because BT, then a 20 per cent holder, did not know what its partner was up to. To make matters worse, BT would be the senior partner, yet MCI's culture would have to prevail for the merger to achieve its ends. BT's loss of confidence in its partner, and investors' loss of confidence in BT's top management will not help. Whatever happens, BT must face far bigger trading risks in future, because the regulatory risk at home is now too high. This is probably not the moment for long-time investors to jump off, but strap in for a bumpy ride.

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Billions of pounds have been invested by investment trust managers in Hong Kong

## Shakeout time in investment trusts

Flemings, one of the UK's highest investment trust managers, this week heralded the start of what promises to be a shakeout in the £50 billion investment trust industry.

In a bid to reduce the discount on its Far Eastern fund from the current level of 8.83 per cent, the investment house proposes to remodel the trust. By giving the trust's 12,500 shareholders an opportunity to exchange their holdings into a Japanese unit trust, another Asian investment trust or into cash, the investment house hopes to pacify institutional shareholders who have been expressing concern about the performance of the trust. Its biggest institutional shareholders include Standard Life, AMP and the Prudential.

Analysis in the investment trust sector believe that moves to restructure this trust could be followed by other similar moves in the industry. Since the beginning of the Seventies, each time discounts in investment trusts build up, the industry finds a way to bring them down again. At the start of the Seventies, discounts were narrowed by the introduction of savings plans, which meant that they benefited from a regular supply of investors' money.

If a trust is trading at a discount to net asset value, shareholders cannot get the true value of their holdings if

Investors in this sector are becoming restive over the size of discounts, says Caroline Merrell

they choose to sell their shares. Discounts widened again at the end of the Eighties after the stock market crash.

Peter Walls, Credit Lyonnais investment trust analyst, said: "The second half of the Eighties was characterised by rationalisation. After the market crash at the end of 1987, markets were down and discounts widened. They reached 24.6 per cent in August 1988, compared with 12 per cent today."

He added that the trusts provided a "happy hunting ground" for arbitrageurs looking for attractive discounts. The rationalisation means that the supply was taken out of the sector and, by February 1994, the discounts had fallen to 4.1 per cent.

It was at this time that many unit trust houses decided to move into the investment trust market, as M&G, Perpetual, Kleinwort Benson and Mercury unveiled invest-

ment trusts. Many of these are now at a big discount.

Discounts may be narrowed for a third time by a spate of unitisations of investment trusts. The open-ended nature of unit trusts allows investors to sell their holdings at net asset value.

Mr Walls pointed out that remarkably the discounts had widened considerably over the past few months despite markets in some areas of the world reaching record levels. He claimed that if markets were suddenly to fall the discounts could be even wider. He said: "Corporate aggressors could have a chance of stepping in."

Hermes, the pension fund manager, has criticised investment trusts for not lacking the discount problem. It claimed many boards of trusts did not exert sufficient independence from the investment companies that managed the money.

However, if there is to be a big restructuring of the investment industry it will come at a price. Speaking at the annual meeting of the Flemings Far Eastern Investment Trust this week, Lord Mark Fitzalan Howard, chairman of Flemings, admitted the costs of the restructuring could reach £2.5 million—representing 0.5 per cent of net asset value. Shareholders questioned the board about the costs, and the capital gains tax implications of the deal. Flemings said there would be extra tax to pay.

When elderly people sell up their homes and move into a residential or nursing home, they often need to draw on their capital and assets to meet their expenses. But as one reader of *The Times* has discovered, banks and building societies are not always helpful when it comes to smoothing the process.

David Quilley has been trying to find an interest-bearing investment account that will allow his mother to transfer capital by standing order into a current account.

His mother has recently moved into a residential home and is selling her apartment. Although she has previously been able to meet her expenses from pensions and investment income, the extra cost of the residential home means she now needs to draw on the money raised through the sale of her home to fund the fees of £500 a month.

Mr Quilley says his mother has a current account with Alliance & Leicester Giro, but the bank's investment accounts do not offer a standing order service. He said: "They have an investment account which could transfer monthly interest to her current account, but that would be insufficient for her needs."

"They have other accounts which give instant access or require 90 days' notice, but both of these require action by the investor on each occasion, and the bank is not interested in a standing request. This must be a problem for many elderly people, particularly if they are not very mobile or no longer adept at administration."

The problem encountered by Mr Quilley and his mother is common to many banks and building societies. Although many investment accounts allow regular transfer of interest to other accounts, most do not encourage the withdrawal of capital, particularly on a regular basis.

Both Barclays and Midland recommended that the money be kept in notice accounts, requiring the account holder to inform the bank in advance when money is needed. Lloyds Bank

## No easy way to transfer capital sums

Jill Insley finds building societies are not as good as other savings institutions when regular movement of capital is required

suggested its Instant Savings or Instant Gold investment accounts, on the basis that the account holder can request transfers over the telephone.

However, this would mean that Mr Quilley's mother would have the inconvenience of switching her current account from Alliance & Leicester Giro to Midland.

Chris Page, a spokesman for Lloyds, said: "The reason we don't offer standing orders and direct debits on investment accounts is to keep the cost of running the account down. This allows us to keep the interest rate on the account high."

Even products designed specifically for the elderly, such as National Savings Pensioners Guaranteed Income Bonds, do not allow ready access to cash. These pay a fixed rate of 7 per cent gross on investments from £500 to £50,000.

But the bonds last for five years, and anyone who wants to withdraw money early must give 60 days' notice. No interest is paid on the sum being withdrawn during that period. Immediate withdrawals result in 90 days' loss of interest.

However, the Halifax allows account holders to set up standing orders to transfer capital from its investment accounts into its own current account. The Halifax Liquid Gold account pays 4.3 per cent gross on balances of £25,000 or more.

Kleinwort Benson's High Interest Cheque Account is more flexible, allowing account holders with balances of £5,000 or more to set up monthly transfers for a fixed amount into any current account.

It also pays a higher interest rate of 6 per cent gross. The account incurs no loss of interest for withdrawals, has no minimum notice period, and no charges for credits, withdrawals or direct debits.

Charles Levett-Scrivener of Towry Law, the retirement specialist financial adviser, said that the capital could disappear quite quickly if too much is withdrawn each month. He suggests that, depending on her state of health, Mr Quilley's mother should consider

using part of her capital to buy an impaired life annuity.

Annuities pay a regular, predetermined income to the investor for the rest of his or her life. The rate of income is influenced by prevailing interest rates when the annuity is bought. As interest rates are quite low now, it is not a good time to buy annuities.

However, impaired life annuities pay a higher rate of income than normal annuities on the basis that an existing illness or condition is expected to shorten the annuitant's lifespan.

If she is in a good state of health, Mr Quilley's mother could buy a with-profits bond. This is a lump sum investment into a life office's with-profits fund. It increases in value once a year when bonuses are declared, and, once a bonus has been allocated, it cannot be taken away or reduced.

An investor can draw income from a bond by cashing in part on demand. Up to 5 per cent of the sum originally invested can be encashed as income free of basic rate tax each year for 20 years. The 5 per cent is known as a cumulative allowance, which means that, if part or all of the allowance is not used, it can be transferred to another tax year.

Not again there are possible drawbacks. Some insurance companies reserve the right to apply a penalty if the investor withdraws a large amount when market conditions are poor.

Axa, for example, applies an exit penalty to withdrawals of 7.5 per cent or more of the initial investment.

If the investor dies, the insurance company pays out the current market value of the bond to the investor's estate. But Mr Levett-Scrivener points out that, if this happens within the first few years, the bond's value will be reduced by set-up charges. "Taking a medium-term view, a with-profits bond should outperform the deposits."

Long-term care, page 33



The high cost of living in residential accommodation has forced many elderly people to eat into the capital that they had intended to bequeath

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## The free market and gazumpers

The British obsession with home ownership and a national shortage of land and housing means gazumping is inevitable. It becomes widespread when, as at present, demand for homes outstrips supply. In a free market, purchasers are entitled to submit rival bids, and the moral dilemma of whether to reject the lower offer rests with the seller.

It is ironic that government proposals to stamp out gazumping will have little effect on London and the South East, where the practice is rampant. Property prices in the capital are so high that the threat of having to pay a few hundred pounds more for the unsuccessful purchaser's legal fees will be insufficient to discourage most rival bidders.

If the Government really wanted to help housebuyers, it should resist the temptation to rush out populist legislation on the issue of gazumping



COMMENT

MARIANNE CURPHEY

Personal Finance  
Deputy Editor

alone and instead examine the whole system of how homes are bought and sold in this country.

Currently, the cost of searches by local authorities is not standardised, nor is there any pressure on authorities to process searches efficiently. Lenders are also guilty of contributing to delays: banks and building societies frequently take two weeks to arrange a valuation.

However, buyers and sellers themselves are also to blame. In the process of negotiating a sale or purchase

people allow their better nature to be distorted by greed. Only wide-ranging legislation will change the process in which the buyer plays a game of bluff in the hope of a higher offer and the seller schemes to force the price down.

### Policies poser

TRADING secondhand endowment policies has collectively earned market makers millions of pounds over the past decade. Voices both within

and outside the industry are now warning that individual savers are overpaying, perhaps by 20 per cent.

It has been a sellers' market. A finite number of policies is available and carpetbaggers have bought with profits endowment policies of mutual life companies hoping for a windfall as well as growth.

Some market-makers have raised their prices accordingly. Individuals who buy at auction often pay the highest prices, because they have little information on which to judge the worth of the endowment they are buying.

Investors are given the maturity value of a fund based on bonus rates remaining constant. However, life companies hint that rates could fall again this year. The Personal Investment Authority, which is reviewing the situation, needs to ensure investors are given a range of predictions, not just optimistic forecasts.

## Watch the small print in inheritance tax plans

Clare Stewart reports on a Revenue victory that may have implications for those passing on estates

Anyone hoping to pass on a valuable property or estate as part of inheritance tax planning needs to look very carefully at the small print of the arrangement after the Inland Revenue's successful closure of a loophole in inheritance tax legislation.

The Court of Appeal ruling on a case brought by the heirs of Lady Ingram this week affects those with large estates. At the centre of the case is the arrangement by which the late Lady Ingram transferred the freehold of her family estate in Berkshire to a trust of which her children and grandchildren were beneficiaries. Lady Ingram leased the property back and lived at the house rent-free until her death in 1989.

It was hoped that inheritance tax would be paid not on

the freehold value of the house but on the lower value of the remaining lease at the time of Lady Ingram's death.

This was disputed by the Inland Revenue on the grounds that Lady Ingram continued to benefit from living in the property.

According to the 1986 Finance Act, where a donor continues to enjoy some benefit from the asset it is defined as a gift with reservation and therefore subject to inheritance tax.

In 1995 a High Court ruling supported the Ingram family's claim, but this was overturned last week by the Court of Appeal, leaving the Ingram

estate facing a tax bill that could run to several hundred thousand pounds.

Charles Russell, the firm of solicitors representing the Ingram family, is now considering its next move. "We may not make a decision until September," said Catriona Syed, a partner at Charles Russell. An appeal to the House of Lords is possible.

Quite how many people could be caught out if the Inland Revenue view prevails is unclear. Ms Syed estimates it could be "thousands" though other tax advisers are more cautious.

"Only the very brave did such a scheme because it is

very chancy," said Russ Stanfield, private client tax partner at Price Waterhouse in London. "We would advise it only as a last resort because it is not something you can test before the donor dies, which might be some time in the future."

There are a number of options to consider if families want to pass on property as a means of reducing the inheritance tax liability. These include parents handing over the freehold and moving out, alternatively leasing back the house at a market rent. Maurice Fitzpatrick, tax partner at Chantrey Vellacott, gave warning that it is impor-

tant that the rent is not pitched too low or you could be seen to have retained some benefit. "It may mean that you err on the side of caution and pay too much rent."

Other alternatives proposed by Catriona Syed include parents retaining the freehold but granting a 999-year lease to their children that takes effect in perhaps 15 or 20 years. As the years pass the value of the parents' lease diminishes, as the value of the freehold is effectively passed to the children. Ms Syed also suggests that taking out life assurance to offset the estimated tax bill could also be considered.

But all of these routes can be complicated. The received wisdom from a number of advisers is to think carefully about using the family home in any way as a means of cutting inheritance tax liabilities.

## Gazumped twice by vendors 'who don't do that sort of thing'



Simon Evans and Louise Coxon thought that being gazumped on one property was bad enough. Weeks later, however, they were gazumped on a second.

Mr Evans and Ms Coxon went to view a two-bedroom warehouse conversion in Fulham, west London, a month ago. Their estate agent had given them the details but it was the owner of the house who actually showed them round. They liked the property so much they immediately offered the asking price of £215,000, which the seller accepted.

Mr Evans said: "We were first-time buyers and had our mortgage agreed. I said I didn't want to be gazumped or go through any wrangling and the seller said he wasn't interested in that sort of thing either."

But nine days later, Mr Evans' solicitor received a letter saying the seller was not going ahead because he had accepted a higher offer of £220,000. The offer had

come through the same estate agent, making Mr Evans suspect that the seller had come under heavy pressure from him.

Mr Evans volunteered to match the higher offer but the seller refused, saying Mr Evans' rival was a cash buyer.

Forced back to square one, the couple went to see the house next door in the same development, on offer with a different agent. Mr Evans said: "The agents claimed they never encouraged gazumping and said that, once they had the offer, that was that." The couple offered the £210,000 asking price, which was accepted.

But a week later, when his solicitor had still not received the contract, Mr Evans rang up the agent and discovered that another buyer had offered £300,000 more. "The agent went all quiet. His explanation was that he was under an obligation to put forward other viewers," Mr Evans' solicitor advised him to offer an extra £100,000.

which the seller accepted. As *The Times* went to press, the deal on the second house was still going through. The couple had not incurred valuation fees on the abortive first property because they were gazumped so quickly.

But they will have to pay a proportion of the solicitors' fees, which would have been £450 if the deal had gone through. This is on top of the cost of buying the second property. According to the Woolwich's recent survey on moving costs, these could add up to about £3,500 (see page 27).

Mr Evans condemned the system of housebuying in England and Wales. "The whole system stinks. It's amazing how anyone manages to buy a house at all. Once an offer is accepted, no one should be allowed to pull out without financial penalty and that should be proportionate to the value of the property."

SARA MCCONNELL

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Nathan Yates gives a timely reminder of a little task for the holidays

# Self-assessment deadline is nearer than you think

The initial deadline for the return of self-assessment forms is looming and the Inland Revenue has been conducting a high-profile advertising campaign to remind taxpayers. If you want the Inland Revenue to calculate your tax for you, you must send back your completed form by September 30.

Once the deadline is passed, you will have to do your own calculations, or pay an accountant to do them for you, if you are to be sure of obtaining a correct tax bill on time. And if you wait beyond January 31, 1998, you will face an automatic £100 fine.

The best way to avoid these pitfalls is to get to grips with the self-assessment form well before the deadline. You may also find when you begin sorting out your affairs that you need extra pages, for example for self-employment, which you need to request from the Inland Revenue. These will take a couple of days to arrive.

The first step in tackling the documents is to assemble all the necessary records, which include evidence of any claims made. In addition, P60 statements of income, P11D forms relating

to employee benefits and bank statements showing interest on deposit accounts must all be filed.

For many of the 8.5 million taxpayers affected by self-assessment, this will be the most time-consuming part of the process. Accurate records are particularly important for those with complex affairs such as the self-employed, and it is worth bearing in mind that the Revenue will be auditing 8,000 tax returns this year at random. Those failing to keep records in a business-like way will be charged interest and surcharges and may be fined.

If some of your records are missing, you will need to find replacements. You have been legally required to keep accounts since April 6, 1994, and even when the form is completed, you must not throw any of these details away. The Revenue policy on self-assessment is "process now, check later", and an inquiry into your 1996-97 return could be opened without particular cause for suspicion at any point before February 1999. You are legally required to keep records until January 31, 1999, or until January 31, 2003, if you run a business or have income from letting property.

Once your accounts have been assembled, the next step is to make sure your form includes all the relevant pages.

The basic form has only eight pages, but this will only cover those with straightforward affairs such as pensioners with few investments. Most people will need supplementary pages. For example, an employee will need an extra two pages, and extra pages must also be completed if you make capital gains or losses, receive dividends or inherit money. If you have not received the additional pages you need, they can be obtained by calling the Inland Revenue order line on 0645 000 404.

In order to minimise the likelihood of being selected for inspection, avoid taking short cuts when filling in the form. Do not leave any parts of the form blank. If you are forced into making an estimate, make sure you tick the box indicating that you have done so, and make your means of arriving at the figure as plain as possible. Remember that incomplete returns will not be accepted. If you had benefits in kind such as a company car, you will need to put down a figure for

your taxable benefit. It is no longer sufficient to put down "per form P11D" or "as PAYE".

If a large portion of your liability is not paid as you earn, it could be a good idea to start putting cash aside so that you can settle your account for 1997-98 next January 31. Those unable to settle on time will face interest charges on their balance, and those still unable to pay 1997-98 tax by February 28, 1999, will be liable for an automatic 5 per cent surcharge.

If you have any queries about self-assessment, you can ring your own tax office during office hours at the number printed on the form. In the evenings or at the weekend you can call the Inland Revenue helpline on 0645 000 444. If your affairs are highly complicated, it may be advisable to seek help from an accountant, and the Chartered Institute of Taxation and the Institute of Chartered Accountants can provide lists of their members. Help with self-assessment is also available from the Tax Team (0800 393 520), with fees starting at £75, and from the Royal Bank of Scotland TaxCheck Service, which charges a minimum of £95.

## My hero, the Taxman

SMITH HADLEY/ASSOCIATED PRESS

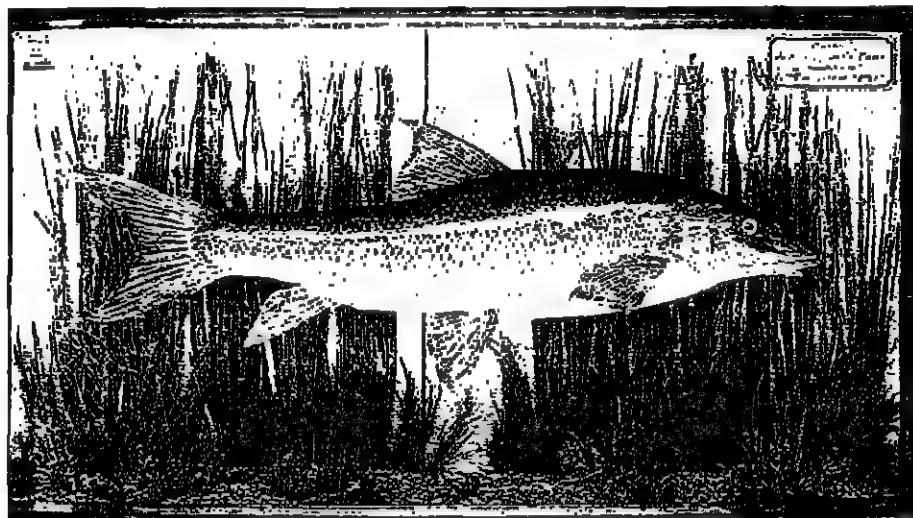


BARBARA ALCOCK filled in her self-assessment form early and has already received a refund for the tax which she overpaid last year.

"In contrast with the rather frightening image that the Inland Revenue has traditionally had, I have always found that the office was very helpful and patient with my inquiries," she said.

Conal Gregory swaps the joys of the river bank for some big catches around the salerooms

## Reeling in a whopping investment



A small barbel, mounted by Gibson in 1886, left, should make about £1,400-£1,600, while carved wooden salmon are a rising market and can today bring in £1,500.

Early fishing tackle and piscatorial memorabilia is increasingly moving from dusty tackle rooms and lodges of great houses to the auction room. Fishing articles are now much sought after both by collectors and by antique dealers who sell them on to interior designers.

Reels, in highly polished hardwoods or brass or nickel-plated brass, are particularly collectable. Early fixed-spool examples, such as the Illingworth No 1 from 1905, have risen from £220 eight years ago to £600 today at auction. Condition, however, is a big factor. A rare 4½ in Featherstone patent bird-cage brass reel in excellent order made £1,050 plus 15 per cent buyer's premium at Bonhams in April 1996. The same firm offers one in not such a good state on Wednesday at its Knightsbridge, London, sale with a £350 estimate.

A Hardy Mark II alloy trout fly reel can make £150, up from £44-£90 in 1989. Similarly, a Hardy salmon reel from 1905 has risen from £55 nine years ago to between £200 and £250 today. There is a revival in centrepin reels and old split-cane rods, says Christopher Hewitt of Bon-

hams. An Alcock Aerial 3½ in centrepin reel from the 1920s makes £100-£120, up from £33-£50 in 1988. Even more dramatic, a 3 in six-spoke ebony drum reel by the

same maker has risen from £95 eight years ago to £500 plus at auction and £1,200 with a dealer.

In some cases demand has pushed bids to more than

double the reserve price. Phillips secured £4,600 in late July for a Hardy brass first pattern reel, although its estimate had been £2,000-£2,500. In rods, a 7ft "Little Gem"

trout rod, by Allocks, can make £120. A classic carp rod, such as by A. B. James & Son and designed by Richard Walker, the British champion fisherman, has risen from £80 in 1988 to £700 today.

Carved and painted fish, mounted on board, are rising. Christie's in Glasgow sold a 47in long salmon dated 1927

for £805 in April. Prices can reach £1,500. Cased fish depend on two factors for their price: size (small ones are preferred by interior decorators for kitchens and bathrooms) and the name of the taxidermist. The detail of the fisherman, weight, date and location are crucial to the provenance

and, hence, value. Two examples from Wednesday's sale at Bonhams illustrate the diversity in price, both of a cased barbel: an 1866 fish of 11lb is expected to realise £300-£500 but a smaller, below 2lbs, 1886 one mounted among a background of reeds, should make £1,400-£1,600. They were preserved

by the firms of Cole and Gibson respectively. But the company to look for is J. Cooper & Sons of London.

Old spoons, Devon minnows and other lures that have survived encounters with sunken logs and river-bottom boulders are the area tipped to grow. Little has been published about spinners but the *Best of British Baits* by Chris Sandford is expected to send prices upward. Until recently auctions included lures in general lots but interesting examples can now fetch £150 apiece.

Books on fishing, particularly with good illustrations, can be delightful. Couch's *A History of the Fishes of the British Islands* (1877) in four volumes made £400 at Phillips last week, while the fifth edition in full hide from 1802 of T. Best's *A Concise Treatise on the Art of Angling* secured £550. Finally, if you extend fishing interests to art, three painters of style are sought after: Geddes, Rolfe and Russell. Good still life pictures of salmon or trout by John Russell from 1870-80 made £960-£1,550 five years ago. Today prices have moved to £3,000-£4,500 — a good catch indeed.

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Gavin Lumsden says fee-based university education will make saving even more vital for parents

# Learning to a different tune

Paying for children's education used to be the preserve of wealthy parents. Last week the Government shattered the remnants of that illusion when it announced it was considering the abolition of student grants and the levying of university fees on students.

If implemented, these two measures will force millions of parents to start additional financial planning. According to Sir Ron Dearing, who led the Government's higher education review which recommended the changes, the cost of a three-year degree course is set to rise to £8,000. Annual living expenses for a student living away from home are about £5,000. A third of all school leavers are expected to go on to college or university this year, a proportion which the Government plans to increase substantially.

The Government is proposing that all these students rely on low-cost loans instead of the awkward mixture of grants, loans and overdrafts which currently makes up their finances. Many parents, however, will want to get involved rather than see their children graduate deep in debt.

Most students already rely on their parents to survive through college. According to a survey by Barclays Bank, 37 per cent of the 875,000 students in higher education cite their parents as their main source of income with nearly three quarters receiving some money from parents.

Meanwhile, the spectre of Government reform is also hovering over the parents who send 600,000 children to be privately educated. Private, or independent, schools benefit from significant tax concessions as a result of their charitable status. The Labour Party, which pioneered the comprehensive education system in this country, has always been uneasy with what it views as a subsidy for private education.

It has considered withdrawing this status, a move that would increase school fees by an average 6.5 per cent, according to the Friends of Independent Schools, a pressure group. Some financial advisers fear the Government could go further and levy VAT on school fees. Product providers are not actively responding to either of these threats although they admit it would require parents to salt even more money away. They are hoping that new Labour, which has diluted its commitment to reform in its past two election manifestos, will not proceed.

Whatever the outcome, there is little doubt that many parents are going to be faced with an educational bill in future. However, there is no mystery to how you prepare for this. As with any kind of financial plan-



Music involves extra fees at most schools and to reach the top level the burden on parents can be very high

ning, the earlier you start to plan, the better your chances of building up a useful sum of capital. Peter Harrison of Whitehead and Partners, a Manchester specialist in school fees planning, recommends people

stick with the basic investment principles: decide what level of risk you are willing to take and then choose a product that gives you the most flexibility.

Charles Levent-Scribner, associate

director at Towry Law, an independent financial adviser, effectively agrees. Planning years in advance when your children are still young is sensible, he says, but means you will be trying to save at a time when

mortgages and other financial commitments mean the family budget is at its tightest.

If you do not want to risk your money on the stock market, or if you have only a few years to save, a building society account is probably your best option. However, if you are planning early both our advisers recommend the much-maligned with-profits endowment policies. These combine investment in the stock market with life and insurance cover, both of which the parents will need. Equity investment provides better long-term returns which should build up a lump sum by the time the children enrol at college.

With-profits policies also smooth out the volatile performance of the stock market so that even if your policy ends in a bad year all is not lost. At the same time these endowments contain waiver of premium and critical illness options which will ensure the premiums are paid should you fall sick or lose your job.

With-profits endowments got a deservedly bad reputation a few years ago when it was revealed how much insurance companies took in charges, particularly in the first few years. However, companies such as Standard Life, Scottish Widows, General Accident and Commercial Union now spread their charges over the length of the contract, which means you will get more of your money back if you do cash in the policy early.

Personal equity plans lack the smoothing facility of endowments. Their use of an annual management charge (typically 1-1.5 per cent) related to the value of the funds means they are not necessarily cheaper than endowments in the long term. However, the combination of equity growth in a tax-free environment is very attractive if you are prepared to rise and fall with the stock market. SFLA Investment Advisers offer a Pep Education Plan starting at £50 a month linked to six investment funds run by established management groups: Foreign & Colonial, Henderson Investors and Mercury Asset Management. It also includes life and critical illness cover.

If you have a Pep earmarked for a pension or a mortgage, or simply want to save more than £6,000 a year, you can still put your money into a unit or investment trust.

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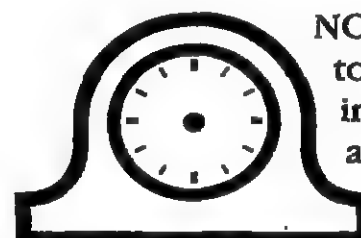
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## Why advisers aren't with the Woolwich

Jill Insley seeks advice on a guaranteed growth bond

Virtually every bank, building society and insurance company has issued some sort of investment bond in the past few months. Moneyfacts, the monthly guide to investment rates, currently lists more than 100 different bonds. So any new product hitting the shelves has to be very special to attract investors.

Woolwich Life's guaranteed growth bond, on sale through Woolwich branches, promises customers a fixed, 5.5 per cent

growth over five years to protect investors' money against interest rate changes or stock market fluctuations.

The bond offers three rates of interest. Investments of £5,000 to £14,999 will earn 5.8 per cent net a year, £15,000 to £49,999 will earn 5.9 per cent net a year, while sums in excess of £50,000 will earn 6 per cent net. The interest is

compounded, which means that it is added to the investor's money and earns interest at the same rate as the original investment. After five years, the Woolwich calculates £10,000 will grow to £13,256, while a £50,000 investment will return a total of £66,911. It sounds too good to be true.

But the return is not quite good enough to persuade independent financial advisers to recommend it. Douglas Gardner, of Thomson Financial Planning Consultants, said: "It's the type of vehicle we would advise clients to buy, but this one is not at all competitive. We would be more likely to use a bond from Hambros Assured, which is currently paying a compounded rate of 37.65 per cent over five years on £50,000." This would produce £68,825 over five years, nearly £2,000 more than the Woolwich bond.

Mr Gardner says he often uses guaranteed growth

bonds in inheritance tax plans. Parents can "lend" money to a trust set up on behalf of their children. Any investment returns earned by this money while held in trust automatically belongs to the children rather than the parents, avoiding inheritance tax when the parents die.

Returns from these bonds are paid net of basic-rate income tax. Higher-rate tax payers are liable for extra tax on their returns. They should consider more tax-efficient investments before buying this type of product. Likewise, the bonds are not suitable for non-taxpayers, who are unable to reclaim the basic-rate tax already paid on the bond.

Martin Mullany, of Brooks Macdonald Gayer, would not recommend a guaranteed growth bond unless the investor has used up his annual capital gains tax allowance.

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Nathan Yates says foresight over currencies can improve your buying power

# Buy forward for the holidays

With sterling gaining spectacularly in strength against the franc and the mark, is it worth buying currency now for holidays later? The pound is trading at about three marks for the first time since 1991 but some economists are now suggesting that sterling's strength will be transitory.

Those planning several foreign holidays in six to nine months' time can take advantage of favourable exchange rates now. However, they are faced with the dilemma of losing interest on their cash once it has been changed. While banks daily and collectively trade hundreds of millions of pounds on the foreign exchange markets, individual savers rarely hedge against movements in currencies. There are few facilities available for those who do.

Leading economists say the pound's current value is unsustainable. "Sterling has reached heady levels," said Patrick Moon, an economist with Lloyds TSB. "It is extremely volatile, and it might fall sharply. If people are trying to be prudent, they should change their holiday money now."

The most secure way to carry money is foreign currency travellers' cheques. These can be bought from most high street banks and travel agents, and are less vulnerable to theft. Each cheque must be signed once at the point of purchase and again when it is cashed.

Barclays this week provided an extra incentive to use foreign currency travellers' cheques by halving its commission charges from 2 to 1 per cent. Under the terms of this special offer, which lasts until the end of September, Barclays will also buy back travellers' cheques at no charge. At NatWest, commission on foreign currency travellers' cheques is charged at 0.5 per cent or a minimum of £3.

Foreign currency bank accounts can also be used to make the best of exchange rates. Most high street banks allow you to open an account in any main currency. Francs, marks



Next season's skiing holiday may seem a long way away, but experts say it is worth buying your dollars or francs while the pound is high

or dollars may be stored in a normal bank account, and withdrawn at a favourable time.

Foreign currency accounts are particularly useful for those who have overseas property or earnings. Account holders can avoid losing out in currency exchanges each time they make a transaction. Some banks, such as Barclays and NatWest, allow you to escape withdrawal charges if you debit your account electronically,

for example when paying electricity bills. If you have a mortgage or other bills to pay in France, it may well be advisable to store up francs in a foreign currency account now.

However, these accounts are less suitable for those wishing to lodge small amounts for a short period. Holidaymakers should take note that the small print penalties of foreign currency ac-

counts may cancel out exchange-rate gains. Many of these accounts require minimum balances which are beyond holiday budgets. At Barclays, the minimum balance is \$3,000 or its equivalent, and at Lloyds TSB the minimum is £5,000.

Midland's foreign currency current account is unusual in having no minimum balance requirement. But customers here face half-yearly charges of £35, a charge of £120 for

every cheque used and a 1 per cent fee each time you pay in or withdraw money. This could cancel out small gains made on exchange rates.

In addition, interest on a foreign currency balance is based on interest rates in the country concerned. In the case of many popular holiday destinations, these are not favourable to savers. Both NatWest and Midland pay a paltry 0.125 per cent on accounts held in French francs.

## Investors pay '20% too much for endowments'

Private investors are being overcharged by between 15 and 20 per cent when they buy second-hand endowment policies from life assurance companies, it was claimed this week. Actuaries and traders united to condemn intermediaries whom they claimed were guilty of overpricing with-profit policies.

But some companies that buy and sell endowments reacted angrily to suggestions that they were exploiting the popularity of second-hand policies.

Richard Ross, chairman of AAP, the trade association of market-makers, said: "The current price reflects the strength of demand and the weakness of supply. Whether or not the market is too high is a matter of personal opinion. Market-makers give an execution-only service and provide no advice, leaving the investor to make his own, usually informed, assessment, or rely on a financial adviser. Nevertheless, the Institute of Actuaries said over-

**You need to be able to take a view on what interest and bonus rates will do in the future**

pricing in the £240 million traded endowment industry was common and individual savers had no way of calculating policy values.

The IoA called on watchdogs to tighten up regulations to protect consumers. It wrote to Colette Bowe, chief executive of the Personal Investment Authority, asking for immediate action.

Demand for second-hand endowment policies has grown in the past five years, particularly those issued by life companies rumoured to be bid targets. These include Friends Provident, Scottish Widows and Scottish Provident. Rather than surrender a policy, the original investor can sell an endowment to a market-maker who finds a buyer. Market-makers only trade with-profit endowments

on an execution-only service. Policies change hands for £9,000 on average. Peter McGurk, a partner in Barnett Waddingham, the London consulting actuary, and a member of the IoA said: "About £20 million worth of these policies are being sold each year, many of them at 20 per cent or more above what we estimate to be a fair price. We would like the PIA to require life companies to give fairer projections of what the maturity value of the policy is likely to be."

The PIA is currently conducting a review of the industry. Some observers would like the Lauto standardised growth forecasts of 5 and 10 per cent pa to be applied to policies when forecasting future growth. They say this would help investors to calculate whether they are overpaying for a policy. But Max Rosen, director of Securitized Endowment Contracts said investors were being charged "between 15 and 20 per cent more" than the contracts

were worth. He said: "We would like investors to be given as much information as possible so that they can judge whether they are getting a lousy deal. We give potential buyers details of how their policy will perform if bonus rates remain the same, are cut, or are not paid in future years."

Most predictions of a policy's value are based on average discount rate, worked out by assuming current bonus rates stay the same for the policy's life. Both Mr Rosen and the IoA say this misleads. "You need to take a view on what interest and bonus rates will do in future and may need an adviser's help," Mr Rosen said.

MARIANNE CURPHEY

## Fight for windfalls intensified by carpetbagging

Caroline Merrell says banks are losing out as savers switch cash

Many of the UK's biggest banks and building societies this week moved to increase their interest rates after last month's rise in the base rate. The rises for savers were in many cases higher than the 0.25 per cent rise implemented by the Bank of England.

Over the next few months, the battle for billions of pounds worth of savings promises to heat up in earnest, as savers with the converted

building societies switch their money in the hope of getting another windfall.

The societies committed to remaining mutual have the opportunity to prove their claim that they can offer enhanced savings rates and lower mortgage rates.

They argue that, as they do not have to pay shareholder

dividends, they can afford to offer more competitive products. According to the Building Societies Association in the first quarter of 1997, the savings rates with committed mutuals were on average 0.68 per cent higher than those of converting institutions.

Among those to increase rates was the newly converted

Halifax, and the Nationwide, now the UK's biggest building society. Both put up their rates for savers by up to 0.4 per cent. Despite Nationwide's increase in rates, its doors are still closed to new savers, because it has been overwhelmed by "carpetbaggers" hoping to get a possible share or cash windfall. The Nationwide will not

say when it plans to reopen its doors. A spokesman said that it could be two weeks or less. He added: "It depends how long it takes to deal with the backlog of applications."

The fight for the savings of the nation has been intensified by the latest summer sport of "carpetbagging" — moving cash around in order to benefit from any possible windfall in the event of a takeover or conversion.

For many savers moving their money from one of the newly converted societies, such as the Halifax, Alliance & Leicester and Woolwich, to another mutual society is a good bet — they can benefit from better rates as well as any possible windfall.

This liquidity in the savings market was reflected in the latest figures from the Building Societies Association. Nearly £2 billion was switched in to the societies in June: £1.3 billion was moved in to the Nationwide, which was then at the centre of speculation about conversion.

Losers in the battle for the UK savings market include the Abbey National, which converted to a bank eight years ago. This week it reported that savers had switched £300 million from its accounts.

The Abbey and the other banks must be hoping that the

recent defeat of Michael Hardern, a freelance butler, and another four pro-conversion candidates who were hoping to get on to the Nationwide board to force it to convert, will mark the end of speculation activity.

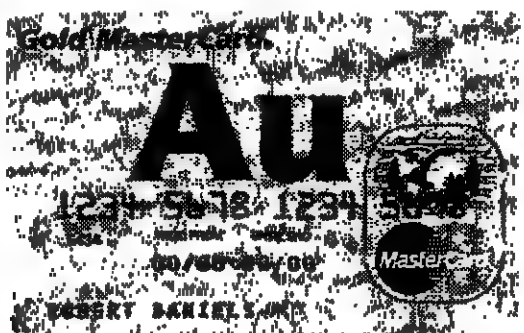
However, this week strong bid rumours began to circulate around the Birmingham Midshires, which is also closed to new customers. A value of around £650 million has been put on the society which will pay a windfall of around £750.

The savings rate rise means that, on an average balance of £3,000, the Halifax will now pay 3.7 per cent interest on its instant access account. The equivalent amount on instant access in the Nationwide will earn 3.5 per cent interest.

However, Nationwide's Invest Direct postal account now pays 6.6 per cent on balances of £3,000. Halifax does not offer a similar account. Abbey National will only pay 3.25 per cent on £3,000 on instant access.

Woolwich, which converted to a bank last month, increased its rates by only 0.25 per cent. Its instant access account will now pay 3 per cent on a balance of £3,000.

However, the best instant access rates continue to be offered by Sainsbury's and other newcomers to the banking market. Sainsbury's offers a rate of 6.15 per cent on its instant access account.



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Barclays standard Visa	£10	21.4%	£205.60
NatWest standard Visa	£12	20.8%	£195.00
Midland standard MasterCard	£12	20.6%	£192.00
Goldfish MasterCard	Nil	18.9%	£157.20

\*Note: This table is for illustrative purposes only. Interest rates are subject to change. Au is a different kind of gold credit card. It offers real value — but it's only available to individuals with a good credit history, who earn at least £20,000 a year. Because we will only ever offer Au to people who meet those requirements, our cardholders won't subsidise other people's bad debts. So, you pay just 9.9% APR for the first year on balance transfers, and a standard rate of only 13.9% APR — giving you excellent value. See below to find out how much you could save. What's more, Au offers up to 56 days interest free credit, and there's no annual fee. If you think Au is right for you, call us free on 0800 000 197 or send back the coupon. Au. Not everyone gets it. Will you?

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£5,000-£9,999	5.70%
£10,000-£24,999	6.40%
£25,000-£49,999	6.50%
£50,000-£99,999	6.70%
£100,000+	6.80%
MORTGAGE RATE	
Direct Line Standard Variable Mortgage Rate	
VARIABLE RATE	APR
7.30%	7.5%

All rates correct as 1st August 1997.



0181 649 9099 MORTGAGES

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www.directline.co.uk A Royal Bank of Scotland company.

Source: Direct Line Financial Services. For further information about either of the Direct Line products listed above, please phone the appropriate number above quoting ref: TT1815

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Caroline Merrell

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Caroline Merrell says individuals face pressure to decide over compensation

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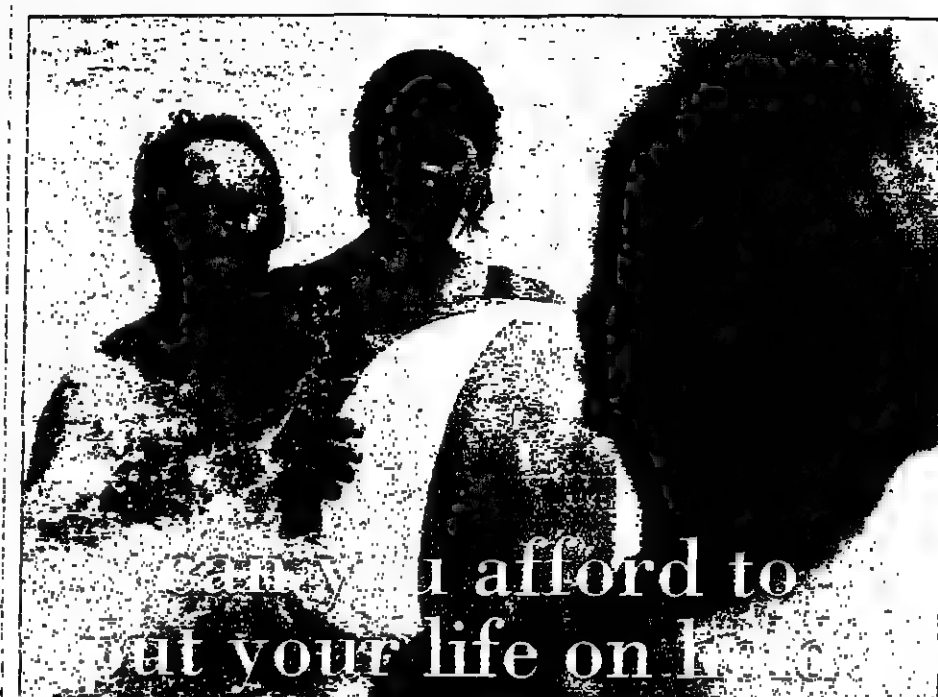
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Focusing on the Public Sector

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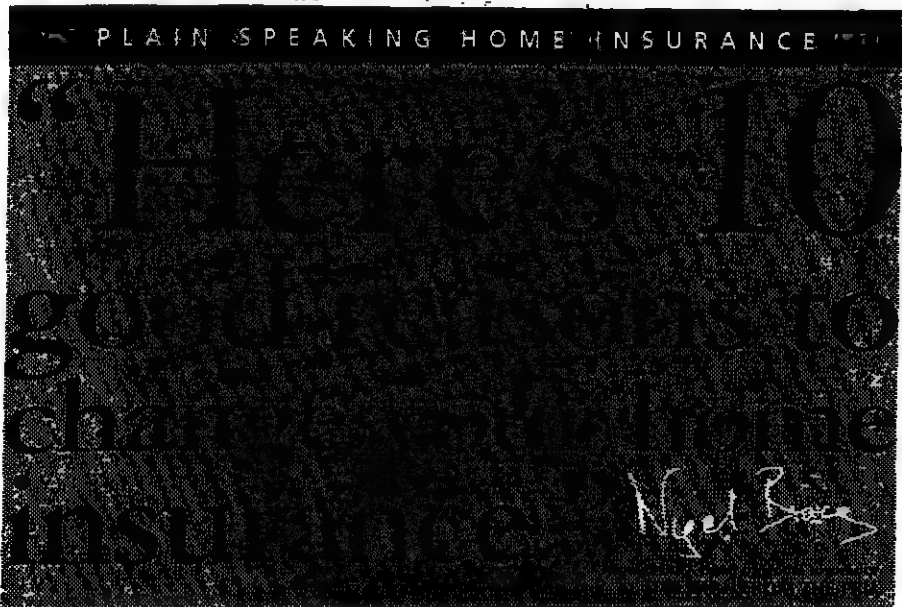
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SAILING: MUMM 36 WORLD CHAMPIONS SURRENDER INITIATIVE AS ADMIRAL'S CUP FLEET GOES OFFSHORE

## Merricks makes the most of head start

By EDWARD GORMAN  
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

ONE would expect better from the world champions in the elite Mumm 36 class than to misunderstand where the start line is at the beginning of the 180-mile Channel Race, the first significant offshore test of the Champagne Mumm Admiration's Cup series, which started in the Solent yesterday.

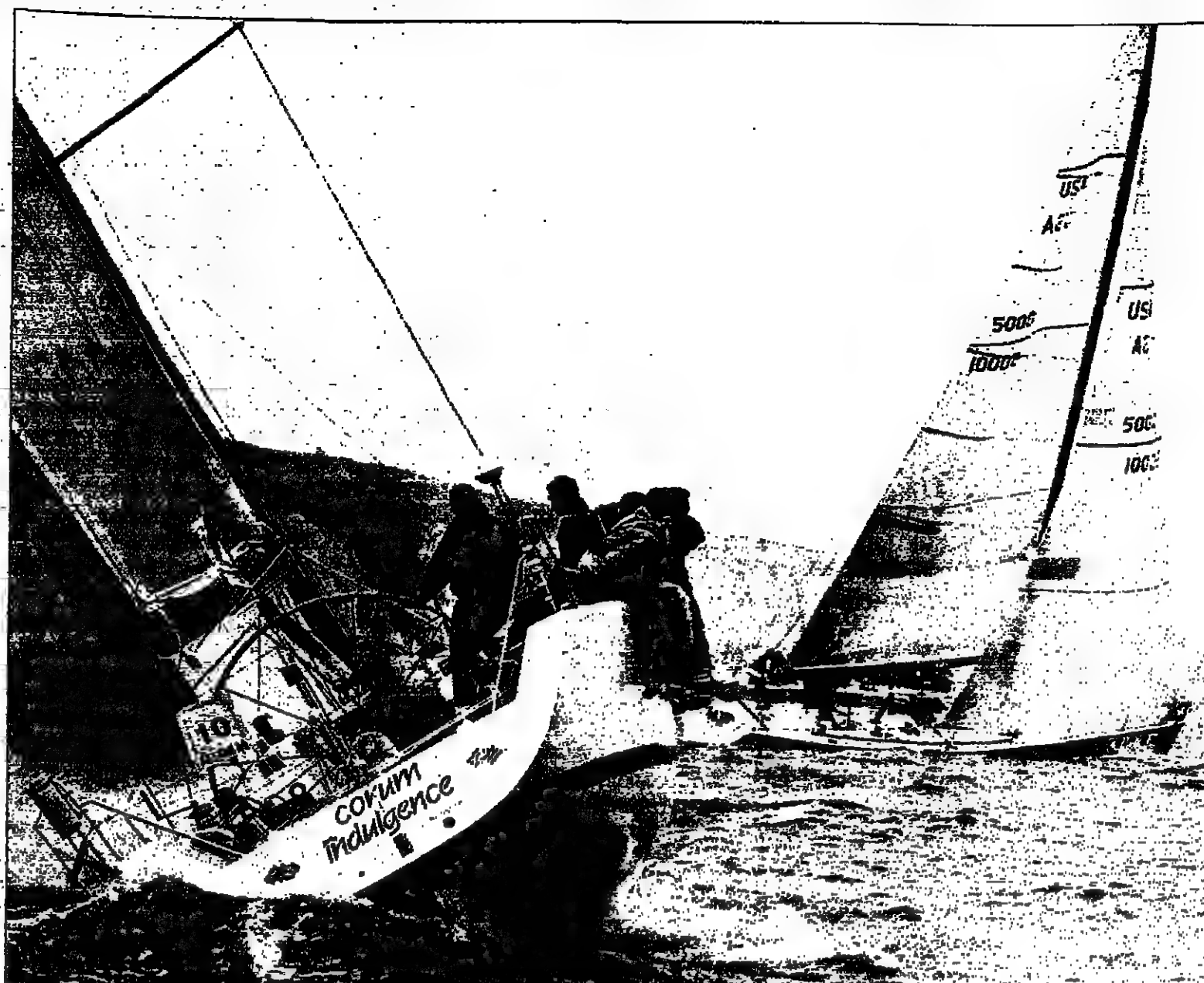
Thomas Frieze's *Thomas i-Punkt* stormed off at the outer end of the line wrongly believing the West Bramble buoy to be on the line itself. When the starting gun fired on the battlements below the Royal Yacht Squadron, Frieze's boat had been over the line proper for more than seven seconds.

To make matters worse, the German boat, skippered by Marcus Wieser, went back after being called as a premature starter on the radio and repeated the same mistake by re-rounding the West Bramble buoy. The Australian Mumm 36, *Sea*, did the same thing. After being warned again that they still had not started legally, Frieze and the Australian skipper, Steve Kulmar, turned back a third time and finally started four minutes behind the rest of the fleet.

The mistake seems to underline *Thomas i-Punkt*'s less than convincing form since winning a very competitive world championship in Italy last month. Undoubtedly this is the result of crew changes forced on Frieze to comply with Admiral's Cup nationality regulations, which stipulate that at least half the crew must be from the nation that the boat represents. The boat has not looked as threatening since.

While Frieze and the Australians made a hash of it at the pin end, John Merricks, of Britain, in *Bradamante*, made another good start, finding reasonably clear air in the middle of the line. By the time the fleet reached Hurst Castle, after a brisk beat with the tide in a 20-knot westerly, Merricks was holding first place, just ahead of the Americans in *Jamson*.

By the first mark, 38 miles down the track, Merricks was storming along, having established a ten-minute lead over



Corum Indulgence, the British entry in the big boat class, shadows Flash Gordon 3 as the fleet approaches the Needles yesterday

the Americans. A frustrated Frieze was still in last place, nearly 18 minutes behind the British boat.

The Channel Race features a fixed-course set just before the start, with the aim of keeping the fastest boats out for at least 30 hours. Alan Green, the director of racing for the Royal Ocean Racing Club, sent them on a long 35-mile beat out past St Albans Head, before doubling back into Poole Bay. There was then

a long downwind sweep along the south shore of the Isle of Wight to round the Nab Tower, before heading back in the early hours of this morning to the finish off Poole.

At the 38-mile mark, the big boat fleet was being led by the New Zealanders, in *Numbers*, with the Syd Fisher Australian entry, *Ragamuffin*, just 20 seconds behind, followed by the American crew in *Flash Gordon 3*, just over a minute further back. Britain's *Corum*

*Indulgence*, skippered by Chris Lay, was another four minutes back in fourth place on the water.

In the ILC 40 fleet, *Easy Ours*, the British boat skippered by Andy Beadsworth, reached Hurst in second place behind *Mean Machine*, of New Zealand. However, four hours into the race, *Easy Ours* had slipped to fifth while the Germans in *Pia* — the hot boat in the fleet — had climbed to fourth after a poor start.

The Channel Race is the curtain raiser for Skandia Life Cowes Week, which gets under way today with a record 906 yachts in 30 classes entered for the world's biggest and longest-running regatta.

Among the main attractions this year will be a proper maxi class fleet, made up of five of the new Ericsson 80s, together with a couple of one-offs and Mike Slade's *Longboard* and Hasso. Platter's Sydney to Hobart record-holder, *Morn-*

*ing Glory* — a 79ft Reichel Pugh design.

Most of the maxis took part in the Channel Race and they made a fine sight as they powered up the western Solent. By Hurst Castle, it was Ross Field at the wheel of the Ericsson 80, *Banque de Luxembourg*, who was leading from Ludde Ingvall's transatlantic record-holder, *Nicolette*. *Morning Glory*, with Platter at the wheel, was racing hard on their heels.

## RUGBY LEAGUE

## Wigan under no illusions about their task

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

ERIC HUGHES has no illusions over the size of Wigan's task as they prepare to tackle Canberra Raiders at Central Park tomorrow. "It will be like taking on Australia," the Warriors coach, whose side crashed 30-4 to a similarly powerful Brisbane Broncos a fortnight ago, said.

Wigan bounced back from that defeat with an exciting win over Canterbury last Monday, but with players of the calibre of Laurie Daley, Ricky Stuart, David Furner, Bradley Clyde and Ken Nagas, Canberra will provide another test of the home side's world club championship ambitions.

"It's a tough call for us," Hughes said. "If you look at them individually, Canberra have got a side good enough to represent Australia."

"It was a surprise that they lost to London. I got the impression that they were perhaps a little complacent and I don't think you will ever see that again. They have got a side that is the envy of every other club side in the world. That's how tough it is for us."

Hughes will give a fitness test to scrum-half Tony Smith, but stand-off Nigel Wright is still missing with a groin injury. Canberra, who are coached by Mal Meninga, will have Royston Lightning, the 19-year-old wing, on the bench.

Leeds can secure top spot in pool B and a play-off to decide the fourth European quarter-finalist when North Queensland visit Headingley tomorrow night. North Queensland's outside chances of grabbing a place in the knockout stages will be dashed if Hunter Mariners complete their anticipated clean sweep at the expense of Sheffield this morning.

Dean Bell, the Leeds coach, said: "We did the club a lot of good with our victory over Adelaide, but it's very important that we show everybody it wasn't a one-off. We will have

to play a lot better than we did against Adelaide."

North Queensland are without a complete front row with three players having returned to Australia: Ian Roberts (knee and neck injuries), John Lomax (family bereavement) and Jason Death (disciplinary reasons).

Kelly Sheldford, the Warrington stand-off, claims that his side's New Zealand connection will be a trump card when they try to rein in the Auckland Warriors in Christchurch tomorrow. "We're all very keen to do well," Sheldford said. "It will be no easy task. But it's a battle that the New Zealanders in the Warrington line-up are looking forward to."

Other New Zealanders in the Warrington side are Nigel Vagana, at centre, Willie Swann, the hooker, Tony Tatupu, in the second-row, and George Mann, at forward.

Bradford Bulls face Cronulla today with only pride at stake. "We're out to salvage some credibility," Matthew Elliott, the coach, said. "Some matches are more important than others — and this is one of them."

Bradford lost heavily in matches Down Under — to Auckland by 50 points and to Penrith by 40. Jeremy Donougher, Bradford's Australian forward, returns after being out for five months with an ankle injury.

Cronulla are keen to win handsomely to ensure their place in the quarter-finals. Much will depend on the centres, where the Bulls' Australian, Danny Peacock, lines up against the veteran Andrew Eringhausen and young Russell Richardson.

Perth Western Reds defeated Paris Saint-Germain 30-12 in an error-strewn encounter yesterday. Paris must now rely on Leeds losing by more than two points to North Queensland to reach the quarter-finals from pool B.

## BOXING

## Rhodes needs stiffer test

By SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

RYAN RHODES, the British light-middleweight champion, from Sheffield, meets Ed Griffin, of Baltimore, at the Metrodome Leisure Centre, Barnsley, tonight. It should prove an easy night for Rhodes as Griffin is not only out of his class, but the American is also only a welterweight.

Griffin has won 13 of his contests, but his opponents have been of limited ability. One of his defeats was at the hands of a Costa Rican journeyman, Humberto Aranda, in April. In June, Aranda was outpointed by Howard Davies, the 1976 Olympic light-

weight champion, now 40. John Morris, the secretary of the British Boxing Board of Control, said that he was not too happy about the choice of Griffin, who, according to Morris, has had only one bout as a light-middleweight.

Rhodes, 20, is the most exciting British world title prospect. He has won all of his 14 contests, stopping 11 opponents inside the distance.

It is time that his supporters were given the chance to see what he can do against some demanding opposition in his own division. Perhaps it will not be long before he defends his British title

against Eusebio Bingham, of Manchester, the former British champion. The bout has been ordered by the board.

Mr. Morris's hopes of a marvellous match with Luisito Espinosa, the World Boxing Council featherweight champion, have been dealt a blow. Hamed, the International Boxing Federation and World Boxing Organisation champion, had wanted to meet Espinosa, but the Filipino's manager said that he will instead take on Carlos Rios, of Argentina, in his fifth defence of the title on October 11. It means a frustrating wait for Hamed.

## GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FIXTURES

## Today

## CRICKET

Telley's Challenge Series  
11.0, second day of four

TAUNTON: Somerset v Australia

Tour match  
11.0, second day of four

BIRMINGHAM: Gloucestershire v Pakistan A

BIRMINGHAM: Gloucestershire county championship

11.0, third day of four, 104 overs maximum

CHESTER-LE-STREET: Durham v Derbyshire

DOVER: Essex v Lancashire

COLUMBIA: Glamorgan v Nottinghamshire

EDGEMOND: Warwickshire v Sussex

WORCESTER: Worcestershire v Kent

HEADINGLEY: Yorkshire v Nottinghamshire

Football

Kirkcaldy 3.0, 1st round

Bell's Scottish League

Premier division

Aberdeen v Kilmarnock

Dundee v Motherwell

St Johnstone v Dundee Utd

First division

Arbroath v St Mirren

Ayr v Greenock Morton

Dundee v Falkirk

Harrington v Partick

Stirling v Raith

Scottish Coca-Cola Cup

First round

Arbroath v Queen of South

Berwick v Brechin

Cowdenbeath v Alloa Rovers

Dumfries v Queen's Park

East Stirling v Stranraer

Forfar v Albion

Inverness CT v Stenhousemuir

Ross County v Montrose

PRE-SEASON MATCHES: Burnley v Manchester City, Cardiff v Sunderland, Ipswich v Grimsby, Middlesbrough v Gillingham, Lincoln v Bristol Rovers, Macclesfield v Stockport, Nottingham Forest v Leeds, Port Vale v Boreham Wood, Southend v Walsley, Tottenham v Farnham, Walsley v Wembley, West Ham v Queens Park Rangers

PRE-SEASON JOURNAL: HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Dornoch v Wick Academy; Bigh v Buckie Thistle; Forres, Mochras v Cove; Fort William v Levenmouth; Inverness, Keith v Clachnacunn; Nairn County v Breich; Rothes v Paterson

RUGBY LEAGUE

World club championship

Pool A

Cronulla v Bradford (5.30pm)

## OTHER SPORT

BOWLS: Scottish men's championship (at Ayr Northfield)

CYCLING: Brough Wheelers Invitation time trials (North Coast, East Yorks, 2.0)

EQUESTRIANISM: British Open horse trials championship (at Garsdale Park)

GOLF: English Amateur Championship (at Royal Liverpool); Scottish Amateur Championship (at Carnoustie); Welsh Amateur Championship (at Pyle and Kenfig)

HOCKEY: Women's representative match: England Under-21 v Clinton (at Bournemouth)

MOTOR RALLYING: Ulster Rally

BIRMINGHAM: Skandia Life Cowes Week

SEASIDE: The League, Bradford v King's Lynn (7.30); Eastbourne v Coventry (7.30); Swindon v Poole (7.30); Premier League: Boreham v Hull (6.30); Stoke v Gillingham (7.30); Amateur League: Macclesfield v Oxford (7.30)

TENNIS: LTA satellite tournament (at Ilkley)

Tomorrow

CRICKET

Telley's Challenge Series

11.0, third day of four

TAUNTON: Somerset v Australia

Tour match

11.0, third day of four

BIRMINGHAM: Gloucestershire v Pakistan A

Asa Life League

2.0, 40 overs

CHESTER-LE-STREET: Durham v Derbyshire

DOVER: Essex v Lancashire

COLUMBIA: Glamorgan v Nottinghamshire

EDGEMOND: Warwickshire v Sussex

WORCESTER: Worcestershire v Kent

HEADINGLEY: Yorkshire v Nottinghamshire

MINOR COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP (first day of two): Dover, Canterbury v Maidstone; Maidstone v Canterbury

ENGLAND CUP: First: Bradford v Old Trafford (at Rochampton, 11.15)

Football

FA Charity Shield

Chelsea v Manchester Utd (at Wembley, 3.0)

## RUGBY UNION

Graham Dawes testimonial match

Bath XV v Gloucestershire XV

(at Ashton Gate, Bristol, 3.0)

RUGBY LEAGUE

Knock-out 3.0 unless stated

World club championship

Pool A

Auckland v Warrington

(at Christchurch, 3.30pm)

Pool B

Hunter v Sheffield (10.30pm)

Leeds v North Queensland (10.30)

Salford v Adelaide (6.30)

Divisional Premiership

Cumbria pool

Carlisle v Whitehaven

Workington v Lancaster

East Yorkshire pool

Fleetwood v Hull (6.0)

Hull KR v Wakefield

Lancashire pool

Rochdale v Keighley

Widnes v Leigh

(at Canal St, Runcorn)

West Yorkshire pool

Dewsbury v Huddersfield

Hunslet v Batley (2.30)

ACADEMY CHAMPIONSHIP: Carlisle v Featherston; London v Bradford; Salford v Halifax; St Helens v Warrington; Wakefield v Hull; Wigan v Leeds

OTHER SPORT

CYCLING: Tour of the Cotswolds international 119 miles (start 9.45am finish 5.00pm)

EQUESTRIANISM: British Open horse trials championship (at Garsdale Park)

GOLF: SPGA Championship (at St Andrews); Senior Masters (at Wetherby)

HOCKEY: Women's representative match: England Under-21 v Bracknell (at Berrymans)

MOTORCYCLING: World superbike championship (at Brands Hatch)

MOTOR RALLYING: Ulster Rally

SAILING: Skandia Life Cowes Week

SEASIDE: Four-team championship: Swindon v Peterborough (12.0); Premier League: Long Sutton v Gainsborough; Belper v Oxford (2.0); Amateur League: Buxton v Hyde (3.0)

## ROWING

## Bowden takes over at Oxford

OXFORD University announced yesterday that they have appointed Sean Bowden as head coach from next September on a three-year contract. (Mike Rosewell writes.) Oxford, who have lost the past five Boat Races, will not, however, be parting with René Mijnders, the Dutch Olympic coach who was Oxford's head coach this year.

Bowden, 34, the Great Britain lightweight coach, will be responsible for Oxford's day-to-day coaching while Mijnders will be the senior coach and technical advisor. Mijnders hinted at a change of role after Oxford's Boat Race defeat last March. "I cannot do it on a full-time basis again," he said. "It has to be something different, but

you would need a coach you can work with well." Dan Topolski, who will continue in an advisory capacity concerned with long-term planning, thinks the new duo will make "an ideal partnership". Penny Chuter, who joined Oxford on a three-year contract in 1994 and coached the 1995 and 1996 crews, will not have her contract renewed.

## REWARDING TIMES

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THE TIMES

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Mees Pierson

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# England debate centres on Thorpe



Thorpe: lacking belief

GRAHAM THORPE, who scored three Test centuries in four matches earlier this year, is in sudden danger of losing his England place as the selectors strive for a combination to reverse the material and psychological shifts of the Ashes series.

Thorpe has failed to pass 30 in his past six Test innings. Certain of his dismissals have been self-induced, while his slip fielding has suffered some alarming lapses. Most pertinently, he has given the impression of being morose, weary and distracted.

The selectors, who meet today in London, are understandably anxious about the rapidly altered mood of their team and aware that, at 21 down with two to play, it has to be put right before the fifth Test begins at Trent Bridge on Thursday.

It will be a relatively

Alan Lee believes both Hoolioake brothers could find places in the party for next week's fifth Test at Trent Bridge

straightforward decision to reinstate Andy Caddick for Mike Smith and to give Adam Hoolioake his debut at the expense of Mark Ealham. Smith and Ealham, however, are soft targets and nobody will be eager to leave out Thorpe. A left-hander in the middle order is considered an asset against Shane Warne — notwithstanding the fact that Thorpe, who does not pick him, sweeps compulsively — and there is no sustainable argument to replace him on county form.

Mental considerations will weigh heavily, however, and if Thorpe is eventually omitted from the Trent Bridge XI it will be because, at present, he seems to lack vitality and self-

belief. If he is spared, which remains likely, it will be because there is no compelling candidate to replace him.

A few old suspects will be lined up as contenders, notably Mark Ramprakash, who continues to play beautifully for Middlesex on good and bad pitches alike. His ability has never been in doubt. After 19 Tests for an average of 16, it is his head for heights that counts against him. Chris Adams will be discussed and perhaps even Graeme Hick, who does, after all, average 42 in his Test cricket against Australia. One other option is to include Hoolioake major in the top six, either retaining Ealham or replacing him with the younger Hoolioake, Ben.

This last theory will have popular backing but would rate as an outlandish punt by the selectors, for Hoolioake minor has done little in his championship cricket for Surrey. Its attractions in psychological terms, however, are obvious and the brothers Hoolioake might be just what the dressing-room requires. Positional changes within the batting order should see Nasser Hussain move up to No 3, a place ahead of John Crawley, with the out of sorts Alec Stewart shifted down to No 6. If his present form both as batsman and wicketkeeper continues, Jack Russell may yet play his fifth Test before the summer is over.

Phil Tufnell is, this time, a

## Essex take cue from Law's bold example

By MICHAEL HENDERSON

COLCHESTER (second day for four): Leicestershire, with eight first-innings wickets in hand, are 515 runs behind Essex

ESSEX batted with real purpose yesterday, to try to shape a winning position in a match that lost 45 overs on the first day to rain. Stuart Law made his highest score for the club, Nasser Hussain contributed an extra hundred and there were runs for Ronnie Irani and Paul Grayson, who shared a fifth-wicket partnership of 143. Then they took two wickets in the ten overs that were left to them after Pritchard had declared.

Law's 175 — four runs short of his best first-class score, for Queensland against Tasmania — took the palm, for it was absolutely outstanding. In an hour and a half yesterday morning, before the rain returned, he and Hussain made 122 quite glorious runs and when he was stumped, jumping out of his crease to drive Brimston, he was a very disappointed batsman.

It was a joy to watch somebody play in such a free-spirited way. Indeed, if there is a more attractive innings in the championship this season, then those who see it will be lucky. Law is not only a fine all-round cricketer, he is also a superb entertainer. He sprinkled stardust here, and lit up two rather murky days.

He made his runs from 223 balls with 23 fours and those three sixes he hit on Thursday. Hussain, who was happy to watch him lead the charge at first, hardly suffered by comparison when they resumed. Early in the morning he took three successive boundaries off Mills and, by moving his feet with characteristic swiftness, he belted Pierson over the rope at mid-wicket.

Hussain features in the

highest third, fourth and fifth-wicket stands in the club's history, which is a record well worth having. He and Law were 30 runs short of the 347 that Hussain shared with Mark Waugh, against Lancashire at Ilford five years ago, when Law finally capitulated but they would not doubt settle for making 317 every time they batted together.

Having gone to his second hundred of the week, following the one he made in England's second innings at Headingley, Hussain eventually went after batting 5½ hours for 128. Whitaker held a low catch when Hussain advanced to drive Brimston and sent the ball whirling towards backward point.

If Leicestershire felt they had earned some respite from the shellacking their bowlers were taking, Grayson and Irani disabused them by going for their shots in an unimpaired manner.

Grayson, who has grown up considerably since he joined Essex from Yorkshire last year, batted more freely even than Irani, who has never been a shy soul.

To his seven fifties, Grayson added a pulled six off Mullally as he went to his half-century in 60 balls. Essex went into tea at 451 for four and the fifth-wicket partnership was only broken when Pierson bowled Grayson behind his legs.

Irani did not long outlast him. Wells, at mid-on, took the catch that ended his innings of 76 and gave Pierson another wicket. In poor light, Essex declared on 533 for eight, their highest score of the season.

They have won their past three championship matches here by an innings and will resume today ever hopeful. Traditionally, the ball turns on this ground and, with his second ball, Such had Maddy caught at short leg.

## Masterly Russell's pertinent reminder

By RICHARD HOBSON

BRISTOL (first day of four): Pakistan A won toss; Pakistan A, with five first-innings wickets in hand, are 54 runs behind Gloucestershire

GLoucestershire would not have dared to imagine themselves in such an even position when they collapsed to eight for three and 23 for five on a quick, grassy pitch. Yet the powers of recovery that have underpinned their challenge for the championship were evident again as they fought back against a capable and motivated Pakistan A side.

Tim Hancock and Martyn Ball completed half-centuries and Jack Russell contributed an important 26 after the new-ball attack of Shoaib Akhtar and Abdul Razzaq flailed the top order. Akhtar, 21, bowled 17 brisk overs from a run-up stretching three-quarters of the way to the stumps and returned the best figures of the tour so far of 62.

He struck Windows on the helmet shortly before a brief break for rain and hit Trainor's off stump on the resumption. In the next over, from Razzaq, Windows was leg-before and Church edged to second slip. A firm stroke by Dawson was snuffed instinctively at short leg by Salim Elahi and Alleyne fended the next ball, which rose sharply, to gully.

Somewhat excitedly, the tourists revealed their inexperience by bowling too short. Hancock, in particular, hooked with ease in reaching 50 in 137 minutes. Four balls later, he drove tamely to second slip.

Ball worked the string Akhtar off his legs for six and produced further well-timed strokes before he, too, perished soon after completing 50, in 91 minutes, when he hooked Razzaq to long leg.

Other than Akhtar, the wicketkeeping of the decentered Javed Qadeer took the eye. It was some achievement not to concede a bye in unfamiliar conditions and, the innings over for 167, he could sit back and study, in Russell, a master at work.

Mike Smith removed Ali Naqvi before Russell held Salim Elahi to his right off Lewis, moved swiftly to account for Mujahid Jamshed, and then took a sharp, low chance offered by Rana Qayyum off Hancock. He would not let England down if recalled for Trent Bridge.

## Sussex fail to come to terms with Donald

By JOHN THORNTON

EDGBASTON (second day of four): Sussex, with eight second-innings wickets in hand, need 157 runs to avoid an innings defeat by Warwickshire

SUSSEX had the misfortune to be caught on an ideal pitch for seam bowlers at Edgbaston and, reeling from a scorching new-ball burst by Allan Donald, were routed for 63 by Graeme Welch and Doug Brown, his lieutenant.

Donald took four for 11 in 10.2 overs, Welch had two for 22 and Brown three for 30. Sussex, demoralised and outclassed, contributed to their downfall with some reckless strokes; but Donald would have overpowered better teams than this.

Following on 164 behind, they lost their openers for seven runs in four overs after two short breaks for bad light. From unpromising beginnings — two breaks for rain within 67 minutes of the start — it was a remarkable and, except for Sussex, a riveting day's play, starting from an innings of enterprise and flair by Neil Smith.

Arriving at 60 for three after Warwickshire had lost three wickets for four runs, Smith counter-attacked so effectively that, with Mark Waugh, he added 70 in 57 minutes, swinging the initiative.

On a pitch offering plentiful movement off the seam as well as variable bounce, Smith hit seven ringing fours off 46 balls, spreading confidence throughout the lower order. There was a further twist, however, for when Warwickshire lost Welch at 188 for nine, Moles, who broke a finger yesterday, emerged through the pavilion gate as Sussex were walking off. Throwing the bat at anything that gave him room to swing, he smashed five fours off 15 balls.

It meant that to save the follow-on, Sussex needed 78 instead of 39, a target they never looked confident of reaching when Donald, having passed the hat nine times, dismissed Pierce and Athey in three balls in his sixth over. Athey with one that straightened off the pitch to fluster his off stump.

Apart from Keith Newell, who hung on for almost an hour, and Drakes, whose 15 included a six and two fours, the rest was a procession. In 117 minutes, they were in and out.

## Incisive Caddick makes his point

By SIMON WILDE

TAUNTON (first day of four): Somerset won toss; The Australians, with six first-innings wickets in hand, are 102 runs behind Somerset

ANDREW CADDICK, contentiously dropped from the England side that lost the fourth Test match at Headingley earlier this week, produced a hostile yet disciplined spell of three for 30 in ten overs when he was reacquainted with the touring team for Somerset yesterday. It was a performance impressive enough to ensure his recall for the next Test at Trent Bridge; not that there was much doubt about that.

Having had some angry words to say when he learnt of his omission at Leeds, Caddick let the ball speak for him as he claimed the wickets of Slater, Blewett and Langer in the space of 18 balls on a pitch of pace and bounce that suited him well.

After Slater had attempted to hook a ball that was not short enough for the shot and skied a catch to Turner,

Blewett — having moved to 20 with five boundaries — and Langer had their stumps shattered via inside edges. While Caddick seamed the ball off a tight line, the bowling at the other end could hardly have been more profligate, the first ten overs from Andre van Troost and Steffen Jones yielding 19 fours and 108 runs.

Earlier, Caddick, pointedly batting in his England helmet, struck a few well-timed blows to reach 16 before miscuing a drive off Waugh, who finished with figures of five for 57 — taking his first-class tally for the tour to 45 — as Somerset were dismissed for 294.

With Steve Waugh — captain in the absence of Mark Taylor, who took the surprise decision to forego much-needed batting practice to spend a week with his family in Manchester — scoring a coolly efficient unbeaten half-century against his old county, the Australians closed on 182 for four, having scored at a rate of nearly six an over. One of the few disappointments for a capacity crowd of 6,000 was

Mark Waugh's failure to stay until stumps after moving effortlessly to 37.

Having had only one practice session in three days since the end of the fourth Test, it took the Australians most of the morning to find their focus. Healy, untypically, dropped a regulation catch and loose opening spells by Kaspravic and Julian were punished by the enterprising Keith Parsons, who reached 71, the top score in the county's innings, before being undone by the short-pitched ball. Holloway, less assertively, contributed 11 to a first-wicket stand of 95.

Gradually, a Somerset side lacking the injured Bowler, Harden and Mushtaq Ahmed was reduced to 167 for six and had Waugh persisted with McGrath, bowling with genuine pace, and Waugh, extracting turn from a straw-coloured pitch, they would never have recovered as they did. Ecclestone, Treachick and Lathwell were all hapless victims of Waugh and Turner promised to join the procession before Waugh took pity and turned to the less demanding pairing of Bevan and Julian.

Turner duly settled down to occupy the crease for an hour and a half, help himself to a half-century and share a partnership of 73 with Herzberg. In the end, Waugh was recalled to sweep up the tail and accounted for Caddick and van Troost, though not without some slapstick. It was not one of Waugh's best performances but it was quite good enough for this Somerset side.



Parsons pulls Kaspravic for four during his dashing half-century at Taunton

### YESTERDAY'S SCOREBOARDS

#### Tour match

##### Gloucestershire v Pakistan A

BRISTOL (first day of four): Pakistan A won toss; Pakistan A, with five first-innings wickets in hand, are 54 runs behind Gloucestershire

GLoucestershire First Innings  
M J Hancock c Shoaib Akhtar b Razzaq 80  
M J Church c Shoaib Akhtar b Razzaq 0  
R Dawson c Shoaib Akhtar b Razzaq 0  
M W Alamy c Shoaib Akhtar b Razzaq 0  
M C Russell c Shoaib Akhtar b Razzaq 0  
Total (5 wickets) 113

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-11, 8-19, 9-164.

BOWLING: Shoaib Akhtar 11-3-42-5; Abdul Razzaq 11-2-33-4; Ather Mahmood 13-4-22-0; Ali Naqvi 23-5-0; Ali Hasan 18-3-22-1.

PAKISTAN A First Innings  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
Total (5 wickets) 113

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-11, 8-19, 9-164.

BOWLING: Smith 10-4-23-1; Langer 11-3-31-1; Alamy 6-3-3-0; Ball 10-3-32-2; Hancock 13-6-3-1; Westwood 11-4-0-0.

Umpires: M J Kilson and P Palmer

#### British Assurance county championship

##### Durham v Derbyshire

CHESTER-LE-STREET (second day of four): Durham, with seven second-innings wickets in hand, need 209 runs to beat Derbyshire

DERBYSHIRE First Innings  
J J Adams 107, S J E Brown 4 for 63  
Total (5 wickets) 176

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-3, 2-30, 3-49, 4-100, 5-134, 6-151, 7-151, 8-157.

BOWLING: Brown 18-5-6-0; Wood 18-10-1-1; Bates 2-2-0-1; Foster 11-4-3-3-2; Boffing 8-3-1-0.

DURHAM First Innings  
J J Adams 107, S J E Brown 4 for 63  
Total (5 wickets) 176

##### Essex v Leicestershire

COLCHESTER (second day of four): Leicestershire, with eight first-innings wickets in hand, are 515 runs behind Essex

ESSEX First Innings  
P J Prichard c and b Mullally 12  
D J Pritchard c and b Mullally 12  
D J Pritchard c and b Mullally 12  
D J Pritchard c and b Mullally 12  
D J Pritchard c and b Mullally 12  
Total (5 wickets) 113

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-11, 8-19, 9-164.

BOWLING: Smith 10-4-23-1; Langer 11-3-31-1; Alamy 6-3-3-0; Ball 10-3-32-2; Hancock 13-6-3-1; Westwood 11-4-0-0.

PAKISTAN A First Innings  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
Total (5 wickets) 113

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-11, 8-19, 9-164.

BOWLING: Smith 10-4-23-1; Langer 11-3-31-1; Alamy 6-3-3-0; Ball 10-3-32-2; Hancock 13-6-3-1; Westwood 11-4-0-0.

Umpires: M J Kilson and P Palmer

#### Gloucestershire v Kent

WOLVERHAMPTON (second day of four): Gloucestershire, with eight second-innings wickets in hand, need 157 runs to avoid an innings defeat by Warwickshire

WARWICKSHIRE First Innings  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
Total (5 wickets) 113

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-11, 8-19, 9-164.

BOWLING: Smith 10-4-23-1; Langer 11-3-31-1; Alamy 6-3-3-0; Ball 10-3-32-2; Hancock 13-6-3-1; Westwood 11-4-0-0.

PAKISTAN A First Innings  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
Total (5 wickets) 113

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-11, 8-19, 9-164.

##### Warwickshire v Sussex

EDGBASTON (second day of four): Sussex, with eight second-innings wickets in hand, need 157 runs to avoid an innings defeat by Warwickshire

WARWICKSHIRE First Innings  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
Total (5 wickets) 113

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-11, 8-19, 9-164.

BOWLING: Smith 10-4-23-1; Langer 11-3-31-1; Alamy 6-3-3-0; Ball 10-3-32-2; Hancock 13-6-3-1; Westwood 11-4-0-0.

PAKISTAN A First Innings  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
Total (5 wickets) 113

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-11, 8-19, 9-164.

BOWLING: Smith 10-4-23-1; Langer 11-3-31-1; Alamy 6-3-3-0; Ball 10-3-32-2; Hancock 13-6-3-1; Westwood 11-4-0-0.

Umpires: M J Kilson and P Palmer

#### Nottinghamshire v Glamorgan

COLWYN BAY (second day of four): Nottinghamshire, with eight second-innings wickets in hand, need 157 runs to avoid an innings defeat by Warwickshire

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE First Innings  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
Total (5 wickets) 113

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-11, 8-19, 9-164.

BOWLING: Smith 10-4-23-1; Langer 11-3-31-1; Alamy 6-3-3-0; Ball 10-3-32-2; Hancock 13-6-3-1; Westwood 11-4-0-0.

PAKISTAN A First Innings  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
Total (5 wickets) 113

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-11, 8-19, 9-164.

##### Yorkshire v Northamptonshire

HEADINGLEY (second day of four): Yorkshire, with eight second-innings wickets in hand, need 157 runs to avoid an innings defeat by Warwickshire

YORKSHIRE First Innings  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
Total (5 wickets) 113

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-11, 8-19, 9-164.

BOWLING: Smith 10-4-23-1; Langer 11-3-31-1; Alamy 6-3-3-0; Ball 10-3-32-2; Hancock 13-6-3-1; Westwood 11-4-0-0.

PAKISTAN A First Innings  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
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Total (5 wickets) 113

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-11, 8-19, 9-164.

BOWLING: Smith 10-4-23-1; Langer 11-3-31-1; Alamy 6-3-3-0; Ball 10-3-32-2; Hancock 13-6-3-1; Westwood 11-4-0-0.

Umpires: M J Kilson and P Palmer

#### Warwickshire v Kent

WOLVERHAMPTON (second day of four): Gloucestershire, with eight second-innings wickets in hand, need 157 runs to avoid an innings defeat by Warwickshire

WARWICKSHIRE First Innings  
M J Church c Russell b Langer 21  
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Total (5 wickets) 113

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0, 5-0, 6-0, 7-11, 8-19, 9-164.

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Classy English  
Derbyshire  
maintained a lead







## Heptathlete can kick-start Britain's medal drive in world championships

## Lewis plotting seven steps to heaven

FROM DAVID POWELL  
ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT  
IN ATHENS

DENISE LEWIS, the only British woman to win a medal at the Atlanta Olympic Games last year, could not be more confident that she will set the tone for a successful Great Britain team performance at the world championships here. In fact, she has had a celebration already.

Not a big celebration, just a short one, on her own, in her hotel room in Crete, where she spent ten days fine-tuning her preparation for the heptathlon, which begins tomorrow. It was Wednesday evening and Lewis had just come in from her last serious workout. The hard training over, she reflected on a build-up that had been "as near perfect as possible". For a moment, she lost control.

"I was really elated," Lewis said. "I got back to my room and was jumping up and down thinking: 'Yes, I think I'm ready.' I had a little celebration. 'One lager, a rare treat. I am in good shape, my head is right,'" she said.

Lewis, 24, will be the first of Britain's five individual event gold medal hopes to know her fate, on Monday evening. Steve Backley, Kelly Holmes and Iwan Thomas follow on Tuesday. Jonathan Edwards on Friday. Since winning the bronze medal in Atlanta, Lewis has improved her British record and is second, to Sabine Braun, from Germany, in the 1997 rankings.

If there had been an award for recovery of the Olympics, Lewis would have won it. Six days after the first day, it seemed that every time she tried to dial into her ability, the phone was off the hook. Worse followed as, in the long jump, the first event of the second day, she was way below her best and slipped back to eighth.

"I was in tears and thinking of pulling out," Lewis said. Had Darrell Bunn, her coach, not been able to fight back his tears — "I could have cried easily but, as a coach, you cannot afford to show your emotions," Bunn said — she most probably would have.

Bunn's words then have a ring to them now: "It would be



Lewis, bronze medal-winner at the Atlanta Olympics, hopes for richer pickings in Athens. Photograph: Gary M Prior/Allsport

very easy to walk away and say: 'She has blown out.' She has to hold her head up for the final two events, go out there and compete. It is important for the future." She did and it was.

After salvaging a medal from that harrowing experience, Lewis competes here knowing that she has margin for error. Her first day is the weaker and the pressure, she said, would be on her opponents if she was right up there overnight. If not? "I fancy my chances regardless," she said.

In the absence of Ghada Shouaa, from Syria, the injured Olympic champion, Natalya Sazanovich, from Belarus, the Olympic runner-up, is perhaps the other main contender. However, Lewis beat her by nearly 300 points in Gotzis in June. "I still have not had that magical heptathlon yet," Lewis said. Then she talks through the two days ahead.

First event (100 metres hurdles, personal best: 13.18sec): "To get off to a good start is of

paramount importance. It sets you up."

Second event (high jump, 1.84 metres): "A more delicate event, needing controlled aggression, it comes in marked contrast to the hurdles. It is about rhythm of approach and finesse over the bar."

Third event (shot put, 14.36 metres): "The shot is a difficult one for me. It used to be a weak event for me, but I am slowly getting used to it. I was doing the shot every day for a week recently to work on the details. I want to go in

knowing my worst event is going to be well above average."

Fourth event (200 metres, 24.10sec): "A relief after the shot. It is about power and, hopefully, the end of a good first day."

Fifth event (long jump, 6.67 metres): "You start stiff, after the first day, but you have to override that and convince yourself you are strong. It is a good event for me."

Sixth event (javelin, 56.50 metres): "A lot of heptathletes have difficulty with the

javelin. Some do not spend the time on it because it is easy to get injured. I have a problem shoulder — that is no secret — and I will probably throw with it strapped. It is a case of bracing it and hoping it is going to fly."

Seventh event (800 metres, 2min 16.70sec): "You have to put your heart and soul on the line, which might make the difference between the gold, silver, or bronze medal. If it means I have to go through a Kelly Holmes impression to win, I will do that."

## Boldon boasts of savaging world record

FROM DAVID POWELL

THERE used to be agreement among sprinters that you cannot predict a world record. Only last year Michael Johnson, despite performance pointers in that direction, utterly refused to speculate. Now, it seems, you cannot stop some of them.

While Johnson has been even less forthcoming this week, dodging media headlines here like a scared bunny, the world's leading 100 metres runners have been full of world record talk. With the first highlights of the sixth world championships looming tomorrow, in the shape of the two 100 metres finals, we were told yesterday to stand by for a world record in the men's race.

Ato Boldon and Maurice Greene, respectively from Trinidad and the United States, lead the world rankings this year with 9.89 seconds and 9.90. They are, prospectively, the Carl Lewis and Leroy Burrell of the late Nineties, two men who train together, under one coach, and who set world records. Except that Lewis and Burrell were gentle on the world record. Boldon and Greene seek to savage it.

"I think Maurice and I are going to give the spectators something to shout about, perhaps even a time around nine point seven," Boldon said.

Even if he meant 9.79 that would be a reduction of 0.05 seconds in the world record, the biggest improvement for nearly 30 years.

Boldon, who came to prominence when he won the 100 and 200 metres at the 1992 world junior championships, still runs both events. He was third in both at the Atlanta Olympic Games and leads the 1997 rankings in both. When Johnson ran 19.32 seconds for the 200 metres, slicing 0.34 seconds off the world record, it was regarded as Beaumontesque. Boldon appears not to agree.

"I think I can run 19.30 seconds," Boldon said. He and Greene are coached by John Smith who, according to Boldon, "believes the 100 world record should be

around 9.74 to complement what Johnson has done in the 200 and Butch Reynolds in the 400 — the 100 record is soft."

Boldon notes Caribbean sprint tradition: Lennox Miller and Don Quarrie, from Jamaica, and Hasleley Crawford, from Trinidad. "I feel like the torch has been passed to me," Boldon said. "The question is: 'What am I going to do with it?'"

Donovan Bailey, a Jamaican-born Canadian, is the defending world champion, Olympic champion and world record holder, with 9.84 seconds. "With all respect to Donovan, we need to be running faster," And Greene? What did he think? "I believe I am in great form and ready for a world record."

It seems ancient Greek history now that Bailey was voicing an opinion in June that he would improve his world record this season. All the ingredients seem to be there, and let us not forget Frankie Fredericks. He was second to Bailey at the Olympics in 9.89 seconds.

These championships see a return to Seiko timing after Swatch was used at the Olympics. According to Lennart Julin, a Swedish statistical analyst, Bailey's time in Atlanta would have been 9.81 seconds if the 1995 world championship blocks had been used. Julin's study revealed that all five men and all four women who reached the finals in both meets reacted slower in Atlanta.

In Gothenburg, rather than the gun's report travelling through the air, the firearm made no sound. Instead an artificial report came out of all the blocks the moment the gun was fired. Julin notes that the speed of sound through air is such that, between the source of sound and the runner, another 0.01sec is added to the reaction time and finishing time. The further away the starter, the longer the delay. In Atlanta, the starter stood on the infield, some 15 metres up the track, Julin noted. Merlene Ottey, of Jamaica, is one of the favourites for the women's sprint title despite being 37.



Boldon: carrying torch



Ottey: a favourite

STAN GREENBERG

## PROGRAMME

All times BST  
TODAY: 08.00: Men's hammer qualifying group A, 08.10: Women's 400m first round, 08.20: Women's triple jump qualifying, 08.30: Men's shot qualifying, 08.40: Women's 1,500m first round, 08.50: Men's hammer qualifying group B, 09.00: Women's 100m first round, 09.10: Men's 400m hurdles first round, 09.20: Women's 100m second round, 09.30: Men's 200m first round, 09.40: Women's 200m second round, 09.50: Men's 400m first round, 10.00: Women's 400m second round, 10.10: Men's 800m first round, 10.20: Women's 800m second round, 10.30: Men's 1,500m first round, 10.40: Women's 1,500m second round, 10.50: Men's 2,000m first round, 11.00: Women's 2,000m second round, 11.10: Men's 400m first round, 11.20: Women's 400m second round, 11.30: Men's 800m first round, 11.40: Women's 800m second round, 11.50: Men's 1,500m first round, 12.00: Women's 1,500m second round, 12.10: Men's 2,000m first round, 12.20: Women's 2,000m second round, 12.30: Men's 400m first round, 12.40: Women's 400m second round, 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## SAILING 37

Merricks makes mark in Admiral's Cup

## SPORT

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Australians enjoy mixed day at Taunton



# Athletes aim to restore golden glow

THE athletes of Great Britain, who found themselves cast as the unfortunate scapegoats for the collective failure of the nation at the Atlanta Olympics last year, will seek to dispel the clouds that have gathered over the great sport of British sport when they compete in the nine-day world championships, which begin here today.

Few sports can claim world championships that are truly global and none can match athletics. There are 200 countries represented here, three more than in Atlanta. To most, Britain stands like a giant, one of the top six nations. After a season in which British athletes have already performed superbly — the men winning the European Cup for the first time in eight years — there is little sign of creaking limbs.

Britain has fewer late casualties than most. A virus cost Roger Black his place but, that apart, the only concerns have been the injuries carried by Jonathan Edwards and Asif Hansen, the two elite triple jumpers. The ailments will not stop them competing.

The form of Sally Gunnell and

Colin Jackson, gold medal winners at the world championships of 1993, has not been good, but that is something that we have grown used to over the past three years. In that time, Denise Lewis has emerged as potential successor to Gunnell as Britain's golden girl, and Iwan Thomas is the new tank engine of European 400 metres running.

Thomas is one of five individual gold medal hopes from Britain, though the one carrying the longest odds. Lewis, in the heptathlon, and Edwards are perhaps Britain's strongest contenders, closely followed by Steve Backley, in the javelin, and Kelly Holmes, in the 1,500 metres. Thomas's chances depend as much on Michael Johnson failing to regain his form as on his own performance.

Edwards, Britain's only winner at the last world championships, in Gothenburg two years ago, remains confident despite a heel injury that has kept him out of competition for five weeks. Hansen, the world indoor silver medal-winner, has missed training with a back injury. However, Malcolm Arnold, the Great Britain perfor-

## David Powell surveys British chances at the world athletics championships in Athens and finds good reason to be cautiously optimistic

mance director, said yesterday that, although she was "not quite 100 per cent" she was "bright and beaming".

Holmes is unbeaten this year and, furthermore, Steve Cram believes that he has seen in Holmes this season the same change that he saw in himself in 1985, when he gained the conviction that he could win races run in almost any way. "I am in the best shape of my life," Holmes said.

So is Steve Backley, Britain's most successful championship performer over the past three years, yet so unappreciated that he has been calling himself "the invisible man". Invisible and miserable, briefly, after Britain's athletes, despite finishing well up the Olympic medals table with four silver and two bronze, were dismissed as failures by sections of the media.

He remembers arriving back at Heathrow to be greeted by a wall of

reporters and photographers. "The first question was: 'Did it come as a disappointment to be part of such a discredited team?'" Backley said. "That was so disappointing, it really hit hard." But, as Arnold, said: "The athletes came in at the end of a wave of British failure and were tarred with the same brush. I do not think we should have been."

Wimbledon and the Open golf championship have come and gone without a British victory. England's cricketers are in the doghouse and the rugby league players have been repeatedly overwhelmed in the world club championship.

Whether Britain's athletes are to return home as part of the recent trend, or whether they will be fed, like the British Lions were for their success in South Africa, next Tuesday will tell. Backley, Holmes and Thomas all have their finals that day. Either way, you will not find Arnold chain-smoking his way

through the day like David Grayney, chairman of the England cricket selectors.

"The men winning the European Cup, and the women finishing third, set up for the mood for the season," Arnold said. "If the men had finished fourth, and the women had been relegated, it would have been dire and desperate. Ours is still the best performing sport in the country."

Others are impressed. Australia has approached Arnold to prepare its athletes for the 2000 Sydney Olympics, but he said that it was unlikely he would accept.

While Britain has a cluster of secondary medal prospects, notably the 4x400 metres relay team, Mark Richardson and Jamie Baulch, in the 400 metres, and Richard Nerurkar, in the marathon, they can be categorised as more of a Tottenham Hotspur than a Manchester United: a team that is capable of challenging on several fronts while not being expected to win anything.

The United States will, as always, dominate, but its national anthem will not be the most

commonly-heard. Vangelis, the Greek who composed the soundtrack for *Chariots of Fire*, has provided an anthem for the International Amateur Athletic Federation, which will be played at each medal ceremony.

For the first time at outdoor world championships, there is prize-money — \$60,000 (about £36,500) for first place, \$30,000 for second, \$20,000 for third and \$100,000 for a world record. How ironic it would be if Sergey Bubka, the Ukraine pole vaulter who has made more money out of world records than anybody, should lose now. He is the only athlete with a clean sweep of titles, having won all five pole vault golds since the championships were inaugurated in 1983.

Women will receive equal pay. How times have changed. Women were banned from the first modern Olympics, in Athens, in 1896. In Ancient Olympic times they were not even allowed to enter the arena. The death penalty awaited any woman who tried.

Lewis eyes gold, page 42  
Form guide, page 42



Black victim of virus

## Champions take on pretenders in Wembley curtain-raiser

# Gullit in no mood for charity

By OLIVER HOLT  
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

A POSSE of camera crews and an excited gaggle of young children gathered in the tidy countryside on the edge of west London yesterday to watch Chelsea give another summer the last rites. August may yet be in its infancy, but when Gianfranco Zola, who had stayed out long after his colleagues to practise his free kicks, trotted back into the clubhouse and left the strip of pitches empty and still, the preliminaries of the new football season came to an end.

Tomorrow, Zola, Di Matteo, Hughes, Wise and the rest will face Manchester United in the Charity Shield at Wembley, the traditional signal that the time for friendlies is over and that the Premiership is about to flood back in a roaring, rustling torrent of matches. At Chelsea, in particular, the sense of anticipation is overwhelming.

Everyone knows United will be strong again, so strong that their manager, Alex Ferguson, suggested yesterday that he would rest David Beckham, one of the most talented of his array of young players, for the first three weeks of the season because he was worried his stamina had been sapped by playing for England in the Tournoi de France.

But this year, for the first time in many a season, there are also those who feel that Chelsea, now in the second year of Ruud Gullit's polyglot evolution, may be genuine contenders for the champions' crown. Gullit appears to have bought wisely during the summer and positions that once were weaknesses may now become strengths.

Where Chelsea previously had an embarrassment of goalkeepers who were not quite good enough, there is now the towering Dutchman, Ed de Goey. At left wing-back, instead of Scott Minto, there is the flamboyant Nigerian, Celestine Babayaro, and in midfield, instead of Craig Burley, there is the elegant Uruguayan, Gustavo Poyet.

"I do not buy players so they can provide entertainment," Gullit said. "If that was my goal, then I would go to work in a circus. I needed players for certain positions and I needed them to learn how to play in this team."

"In some ways, it was easy for us last year because it was



Dummy run: Zola, the Chelsea forward, practises free kicks in training yesterday, using a cardboard cut-out wall. Photograph: Robin Mayes

a new team and nobody expected anything of us. Now we need to be aware that teams will look differently at us. In the pre-season even, we have wanted to play friendly matches against other teams but they have not wanted to be so friendly with us.

"Everywhere I have been, my second year has been the most difficult part. You can get sloppy and complacent and lose motivation and that is not right. You have to respect the opposition and respect yourself. This season, I will do what I always do and take one week at a time. I do not want to look beyond that and talk about championships and things. I have the squad that I want now and all I am expecting is for them to do better than last year."

Gullit said time and again how much he admired the consistent excellence Ferguson had achieved at Old Trafford and that even the loss of Eric Cantona, who retired at the

## TEAMS

MANCHESTER UNITED (probable): 1-4-2-3, P Scholes — D Brown, G Neville, R. Johnson, P. Neville — P. Scholes, N. Butt, R. Keane, R. Giggs — J. Cruick, E. Shefferson.  
CHELSEA (probable): 1-4-2-3, Ed de Goey — F. Sinclair, S. Clarke, F. Lefebvre, D. Granville — D. Poyet, J. Minto, G. Poyet, D. West — M. Hughes, G. Zola.  
Reserves: P. Jones.

end of last season, was unlikely to affect their dominance. "The other players will want to show that they are as good as him," Gullit said.  
At The Cliff, United's Sal-

ford training ground, the message was much the same. Gary Neville, who is struggling to be fit for the match against the FA Cup winners tomorrow, said the absence of the Frenchman had received scant mention at the club as they prepared to try to defend the title they won at a canter last season.

"To be honest with you, this is a cynical club," Neville said. "Eric does not get a mention. We just get on with it. He has gone and our attitude is simply 'there's another player gone'. It makes you think what it would be like if you left yourself. Nobody would give two hoots."

"Eric was massive but Manchester United and the club go on without him. It is more than a one-man team. It

is a club that seems to lose a big player every season or at least it has for the last five or six years. Players you might think you can't do without. The club has gone on and got even better without those players and that is what we have to do this year without Eric Cantona."

To add substance to his hopes, Neville pointed out that United's midfield against Chelsea was likely to be Paul Scholes, Roy Keane, Nicky Butt and Ryan Giggs. To complement them, Teddy Sheringham, one half of England's fearsome strike-force, will be in attack. The Frenchman who was king has gone but the cast that once supported him is ready to step up.

Foreign aid, page 43

## ON MONDAY



A 24-page guide to the Premiership  
PLUS  
Choose your Fantasy Team

## Cotton to play role he coveted

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

FRAN COTTON'S substantial presence, which has loomed over British rugby during the recent British Isles tour of South Africa, now takes shape within the confines of the English game. The Lions manager was named yesterday as joint vice-chairman of the Rugby Football Union's (RFU) management board with responsibility for the strategic development of the representative game.

Cotton, perhaps the single most influential supporter of Cliff Brittle in the elections for board chairman last month, will now appear even more as the power behind Brittle's throne. His title will be that of management board vice-chairman (playing) and he is joined by another power broker during the recent political infighting that has plagued the RFU, Sir Michael Shear, who becomes management board vice-chairman (administration) and will work with the new support services personnel at Twickenham.

This is precisely the role that Cotton has sought in his crusade to restore the integrity of the union, which extends not only to the game within England, but also to relation-

ships with other national unions within the northern hemisphere. Throughout the Lions tour, when the best players from England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales demonstrated their capacity to take on the world champions and win, Cotton emphasised the need for the home unions to stand together as an effective lobby within world rugby.

"The appointment covers all aspects of the national team," Cotton said. "My primary involvement will be strategic planning and it will require good, professional, full-time people to implement and deliver the agreed policies." Cotton will work closely with Bill Beaumont, his former playing colleague and now chairman of the national playing committee, which meets on August 28 to determine the management of the national team.

"I'll sit down with the personnel to discuss the playing style we think is suitable for England to be successful at international level, both in the northern and southern hemisphere," Cotton said.  
□ Bath have named Andy Nicol, the Scotland and British Lions scrum half, as their new captain.

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OFFERS AND RATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

## Weary North proves unable to rise and shine

By PAT GIBSON

IT WAS to have been a fairy-tale comeback to first-class cricket. Philip North, a left-arm spin bowler who captains Wales in the Minor Counties competition, had been recalled to the Glamorgan side after an absence of eight years for their crucial Britannic Assurance county championship match against Nottinghamshire.

Only it never happened. By the time that North's sponsored sky blue Toyota screamed into the last available space in the car park at the Colwyn Bay Cricket Club yesterday morning, Glamorgan had named

their team and he was not in it. "Philip arrived at the ground over an hour late," Mike Fatkin, the Glamorgan secretary, explained, "and we felt that it was not appropriate to play him for disciplinary reasons."

North, 32, jibbed at the "disciplinary" bit. "That conjures up images of fighting and brawling, but it was nothing like that," he said. "I missed my wake-up call. That is the start and finish of it."

North was sharing a room with Hugh Morris, the former Glamorgan captain and England opening batsman, in the team hotel at Llandudno, where they had booked a call for 8am.

Apparently, Morris left for breakfast before the call came and then headed straight off to the ground, leaving his room-mate to sleep on — until 10am. "I just cannot understand why I didn't get the call," North said. "It had not been an overly late night, that's the worst part of it."

Late night or not, it was a late morning — about 10.50, to be precise — by the time he had driven the six miles to the ground at Rhos-on-Sea and he accepted that Glamorgan had no alternative but to leave him out. "The rules are the rules and the club were right to do what they did," he said. "You have to be at the

ground by 9.30; if you're a little bit late you get fined and if you are very late, like I was, you get dropped. I feel very badly about it and have apologised to the club. I have let them down and I have let myself down. I picked a hell of a day to have a lie-in."

North was released by Glamorgan in 1999 after five years on the staff but had been recalled because Dean Cosker, their young left-arm spinner, was required to play for the England Under-19 team.

"Matthew Maynard [the Glamorgan captain] and I have been talking about such a contingency since last winter so obviously I am very

disappointed," North said. "It was never 100 per cent certain that I was going to be in the side and it was only ever going to be a one-off thing, but it would have been nice to play."

Instead, Gary Butcher, an all-rounder, took his place while North spent the rest of the day acting as twelfth man before travelling back to Swansea, where he has been the professional for the past four years. He will play today in their South Wales Cricket Association match, against Briton Ferry Steel, at St Helen's, and said: "At least I will get to play on a county ground."

County reports, pages 40 and 41

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For better  
or for worse  
- let the  
computer  
decide





Have you  
the neck  
to wear the  
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# THE TIMES weekend

Win a  
Cherry Coke  
surfboard  
worth £1,500  
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SATURDAY AUGUST 2 1997

## For better or for worse - let the computer decide

Are you really right for each other?  
**Jill Parkin** reports on a new  
exam that could stop you making  
the biggest mistake of your life

**W**ould you have married him had you known that he spent Saturdays with ferrets? Or if you had had an inkling of her passion for garlic? Or if you had ever suspected the effect that fluffy slippers would have had on your love life?

Perhaps, before you had fallen on one knee, wiped a clammy palm and bid for her hand, you should have asked what is about to become the question for every modern courting couple: "Will you... will you... will you fill in a pre-marital questionnaire with me?"

It may not have quite the same ring as a direct proposal. It may end up with a wedding ring at all. It might, however, keep you out of the divorce courts a few years down the conjugal line.

Thousands of Americans are taking the marriage exam, an inventory of more than 100 questions, to find out whether they should be getting married at all. Eleven states, including Washington, Colorado, Minnesota and Georgia, are considering whether to make the exam compulsory. Louisiana already has legislation on its books. And where America leads, Britain will surely follow. The concept is over here.

A handful of English clergymen and a few professional counsellors are preparing couples for marriage not with a pep-talk about commitment and tolerance but with a list of 125 multiple-choice questions and a computer analysis.

From inner-city Hackney to rural Norfolk, couples are turning up at the vicarage to be quizzed about his and her sexual expectations, favourite television programmes and future in-laws.

When the computer has done its crunching, the couples return to discuss the results and their proposed marriage in three or four follow-up sessions. No one actually says to you "do it" or "don't even think about it", but research in America shows that Prepare, one of the main systems,

predicts divorce with 85 per cent accuracy.

The exam is a psychometric test, designed to draw out your unconscious attitudes. "We have the highest divorce rate in Europe," says the Rev Peter Brown, a Norfolk vicar who uses Prepare and brought it to Britain recently after working in America. "More than one in three marriages end in divorce. And there's nothing romantic about that."

More than one million people have sat the Prepare exam in the United States. Ten per cent of them decided not to marry after the results came through. Their results were just like those of the couples who went ahead, married and subsequently divorced.

Worldwide, Prepare has 35,000 practitioners, mainly in America. In Britain we have about 60, mainly clergy, including four or five vicars who insist that this is the only way they will fulfil their duty to prepare couples for marriage. In other words, they make the marriage exam compulsory on their patch.

**A** judge in Lenawee County, an hour's drive from Detroit, has effectively made marrying without inventory impossible in the county, where 68 per cent of marriages end in divorce. Judge James Sheridan is very keen on Prepare and has the agreement of the 60 churchmen and the 12 other marriage officials in the county.

Couples fill in their Prepare forms separately. The questions cover 11 problem areas, including money, sex, children, family of origin, religion, spare time and friends. The answers range through five degrees, from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly".

The whole thing sounds a bit freaky and American. There's quite a lot of God (He gets as many questions as sex and all the other areas) for British tastes, and the vocabulary needs anglicising. But you don't succeed or fail in the

Continued on page 2



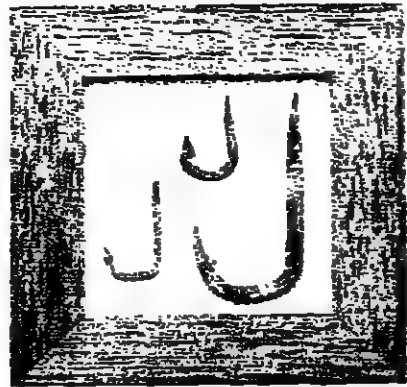
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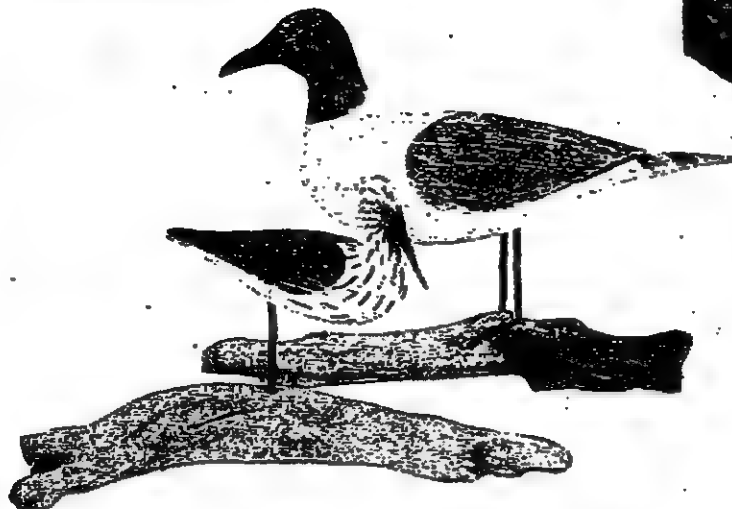
LEFT: Antique Palestinian fish hook with a certificate of authenticity, in wooden frame, £35. Ancient Art (mail order: 0181-882 1509)



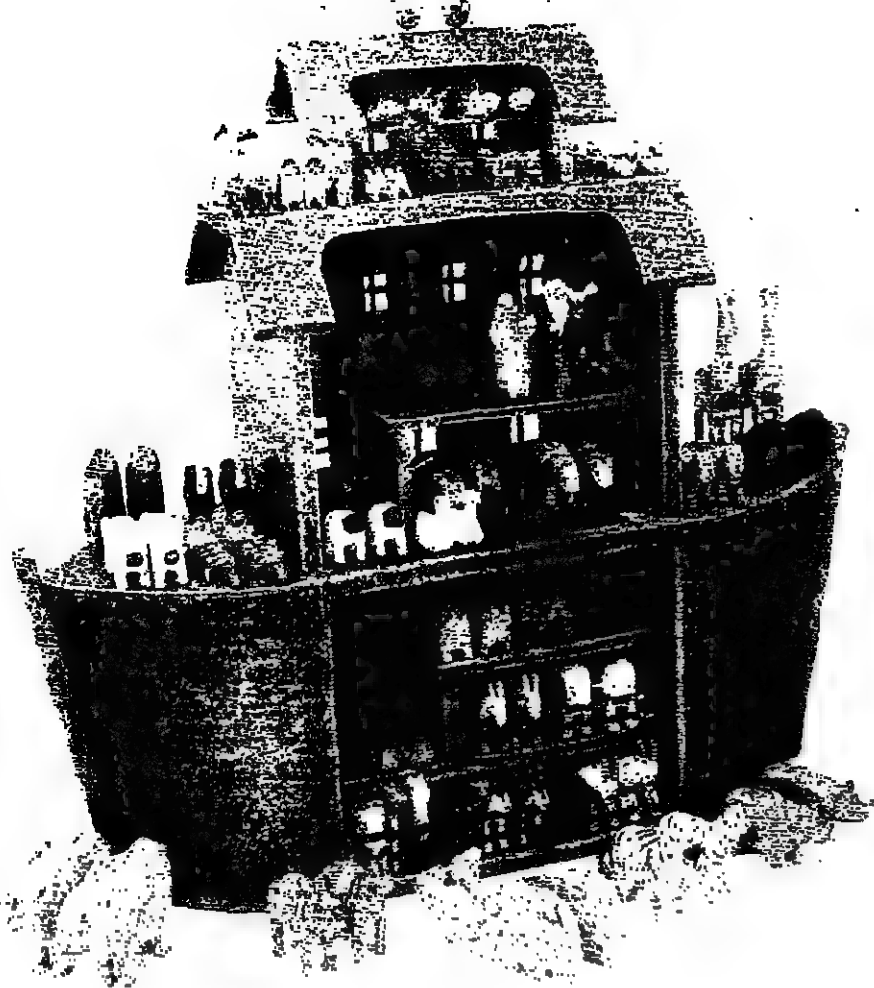
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RIGHT: Laughing Gull (top) £89.95 and Baby Shorebird (below) decays, £29.95. Shaker, as before



ABOVE: Miniature Noah's Ark with hand-carved and hand-painted animals, £295 for seven pairs of animals; £1,295 for 39 pairs. Shaker, 27 Harcourt Street, London W1 (0171-734 7672) or 322 King's Road, London SW3 (0171-352 3918)

RIGHT: Octopus hand-painted steel mirror, £49. The Catalogue (by mail: 0171-371 7017)

## 'Could the quiz have saved the Carlings or the Conrans?'

Continued from page 1

marriage exam. You have strengths and weaknesses, or "growth areas". For example, if you run ten credit cards and your partner keeps his or her pay packet under the mattress, financial management will come up as a "growth area". Dr Brown, an Englishman, is far from what most of us think of as a typical vicar. His doctorate is in textiles, from the University of Leeds. After university, he went to teach at the University of Minnesota, where a social sciences colleague, David Olson, was creating Prepare. Then, as part of his training for the priesthood, Dr Brown was taught to use the inventory.

"We're a much more mobile society and that has created a less stable base on which to build our lives," he says. "Fifty years ago we would probably have lived within easy reach of parents, brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles, which creates a pressure to conform. Now we have more freedom, but less help and collective wisdom. I wouldn't want to go back to that society, but we need something to replace that structure. And that's what Prepare does."

He has been married, the second time around, for 30 years, and is happy to marry divorced people in church.

Tania and Michael Jenkins, both divorced, found themselves doing Prepare simply because they asked Dr Brown to marry them. They'd been living together for three years and had a baby. "We hid our answers from each other," says Mrs Jenkins, who is 27 and a housewife. Her husband, 38, is a painter and

decorator. "Some of the questions had us in stitches, but there were lots of things we didn't know about each other. You realise you don't communicate, though you go along thinking you do. It was mainly to do with holding in feelings. We talked about our mothers' deaths for the first time and now we talk things through."

Perhaps you'd rather curl up with your honeymoon holiday brochures than consider propositions such as "I go out of my way to avoid conflict with my partner". "I believe the woman's place is basically in the home" or "I believe my partner may be too interested in sex". But seeing it all on paper and going through things with a third party was just what Jane Belton, 25, needed. She married Matthew Stubbs, 30, in May, with the blessing of Prepare. She is a charity worker for the Christian Children's Fund and her husband is a lawyer.

"The questionnaire was exciting and enjoyable," she says. "When you're getting married everyone is concentrating on the wedding. They all want to hear about the dress, the cake, the ring. No one actually wants to discuss the marriage itself, the years that follow that one day."

Mrs Stubbs read about Prepare in a wedding magazine, and the couple had their consultation with Nick Gulliford, a lay preacher and the UK co-ordinator for Prepare. She says: "I tend to feel that I must be talking all the time and that silence is a bad thing. I thought that when Matthew



Would the computer have predicted the parting of Sir Terence Conran and his third wife?

was just staring in space he was bored with me, or that there was a problem, or that he was plotting to do away with me or something. The tension I felt came out through Prepare and I became a lot more accepting and less worried after hearing him talk about how valuable he finds time to stare.

"It makes you confront issues rationally, because it's not a crisis time. You're not upset or fighting your corner. And you feel your growth areas are a challenge, not a failing. Everything was discussed. It makes you stop and think. It asks, 'What do you think it's going to be like?'

Your answers are confidential, even from each other. The practitioner doesn't say, 'Adam, Eve thinks you're stubborn.' But he knows she does, so he says something like 'Is one of you more stubborn than the other?'

"One of the beauties of the inventory," says Mr Gulliford, "is that it goes straight to the point. You have the main areas of likely conflict, you answer the questions and the

computer then shows the disagreements. It's very quick." Linda and Chris Carter-Jackson have a few "growth" areas. They married, each for the first time, a couple of years ago, when she was 42 and he was 39. "Doing Prepare has the same atmosphere as doing therapy," Linda says. "You can say things with a third person there that you can't say directly. It creates a safe place. You can expand into it and look inside your own head."

Linda was troubled by what she sees as a North-South divide. But what sounds more like a divide of class and education. Her husband, a quality assurance controller, is from Sunderland; she's an archivist from Somerset. They live in London.

"I say something to my husband and think I've planted a clear message, but he doesn't receive it," she says. "I'm a Girl Guide type. He has a great heart, he's well-meaning and only about 70 per cent reliable. Prepare showed up the areas we were skirting

around, such as children. It gave me a great tolerance and showed me how differently he sees life."

Does her husband think Prepare is a good thing? "There's a distinct possibility of its being a good thing," he says. "When you go and listen to what the practitioner says you can't just leave it there. You have to bring it home and talk it through. There were quite a few areas we were close on, and some surprising ones on which we were miles apart."

"When you're doing Prepare, you hear something and you think, 'That's not me.' Then you think, 'Bloody hell, it is me.' The one doubt I have is that it might throw some difference up which never would become a problem."

Malcolm Macnaughton, the Area Dean of Hackney in east London, intends to make Prepare a compulsory part of his marriage preparation of couples. He and his wife, Pamela, have just filled in the sister inventory for married couples who want to improve their relationship. The programme is called — again very Ameri-



Break-up: Will and Julia Carling, left, and Ivana Trump and Riccardo Mazzucchelli



### JILL PARKIN TAKES THE 'IS YOUR MARRIAGE OK?' EXAM

ON THE FACE OF IT, my husband and I didn't look a good bet. There's an age gap which stretches between Jerry Lee Lewis and Dire Straits. He was divorced when we met and we lived more than 250 miles apart. He doesn't like fish or fruit. He has items in his wardrobe which pre-date flares. And, a very bad thing, say the Prepare people, we lived together before marriage. Anyhow, everything that mattered seemed to be going for us, so six years ago we married, without benefit of computer clearance. Last week, we took the Prepare/Enrich exam to check progress.

"Other marriage advice services could save a lot of time if they used the exam," said Nick Gulliford, a full-time chartered accountant before he encountered Prepare. "They spend so long talking round in circles trying to identify the problem."

Instead of talking, my husband and I sat in separate rooms studying questions such as, "I am reluctant to be affectionate with my partner because it is often misinterpreted as a sexual advance" and "I am not pleased with the personality characteristics and personal habits of my partner". Did that

mean his habit of leaving traces of butter in the jam, and the teabags I leave in the sink? Is he really spending hours on the vegetable patch not because he likes broad beans but simply because he's terrified of a snake's advance? One hundred and twenty-five questions later we posed our sheets to the Prepare computer. A day or two later the phone rang and Dr Peter Brown, who brought Prepare to this country from America, said: "It looks as if you're stuck with this guy for life, Jill. How do you feel about that?"

I could have replied by quoting question No 94 in the inventory, "I do not seem to have fun unless I am with my partner", but that would not be true, especially as I'm usually on the gin when he's on the

vegetable patch. Anyhow, Mr Gulliford came to see us and pronounced us a "vitalised" couple. The best sort, in descending order, they go: vitalised, harmonious, traditional, conflicted and devitalised.

We should be feeling pretty good. Actually, only a couple of days later, we still wonder if we are in a Greek tragedy — smug, full of hubris, about to meet Nemesis.



Parkin: "We are the best sort of 'vitalised' couple"

willing to adjust as the wife? I doubt whether Prepare would have saved the marriage of Ivana Trump and her Italian beau Riccardo Mazzucchelli, who have separated after 18 months. The year of pre-nuptial agreement negotiations were testing enough for any couple — one reporter at the time said that they made the Balkan peace talks at the time look like a vague arrangement to "do lunch". The fact that her bouquet of lilies of the valley began to wilt under the camera lights at the wedding service in a New York hotel lobby might have been portentous.

The wedding exam is also unlikely to prepare any couple for repeated encounters with Diana, Princess of Wales. Julia and Will Carling might have had no trouble with the proposition, "there is nothing that would cause me to question my love for my partner" until the former rugby captain met the Princess and became captivated.

However, the suggestion is

that the pre-marital quiz will help to anticipate pitfalls as long as its contestants are prepared to be honest.

"Instead of preparing couples just for weddings, we ought to be preparing them for the whole thing they're taking on and give them some of the skills needed to make it work," the dean adds. "That commitment should not stop at the time of marrying them. They need to feel they can come back for help."

You might especially want to return if you agree strongly with the question, "My partner does not take our disagreements seriously" or "I believe my partner may be too interested in sex". But the marriage exam can only be a good thing, because it makes you sit down, think and talk.

The trouble is, the exam is also very funny.

● To take the Prepare or Enrich exams costs £20. The cost of follow-up sessions varies, but is likely to be £30 an hour. Some vicars will meet part of the cost from parish funds. For more information call freephone 0500 900099.

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Fluid, lingerie-inspired dresses with draped necklines are the season's sophisticates, says Heath Brown

# Go on, stick your neck out



If dressing up is all about making a woman more beautiful, nothing does it more effectively than a draped neckline, according to Ren Pearce and Andrew Florida, the talents behind the fashion label Pearce Florida. "A draped neckline on a dress creates a lovely frame for a woman's face and is flattering without being overpowering," they say of the look that has become a signature for their catwalk collections. "This season we have updated the little black dress with it, making it an essential item."

Many other designers have used this "essential" style in their collections, including Katharine Hammett, Hussein Chalayan and Sonja Nuttall, who uses it to emphasise a sense of glamour. "If cut well, the cowl neckline is very sensual and elegant," says Nuttall, whose bias-cut dresses are cut to support the bust beneath the folds. The neckline is particularly flattering, she adds, if the fabric is cut on the bias, which makes the grain fall more fluidly.

Although the style was popular in the Twenties and Thirties, the look now is not retro. "The draping detail uses an old technique, but for a modern approach," says Tish Krohn of Warehouse, which stocks several of the styles in georgette, jersey and velvet. Krohn suggests wearing the dresses with severely cut jackets, giving the look a Nineties kick. "The lines of this sort of dress are refined and soft, which look feminine worn with sharp tailoring."

The neckline also gives an added twist to the slip dress, updating the simple strappy styles that, for a while now, have taken their look from lingerie and nightwear.

"This season the feel is for sexy lingerie-inspired dresses in fluid fabrics," says Gail Casimir, the chief designer at Etam. "The drape neck provides elegant but minimal detail which accentuates the female form rather than revealing it."

And to accessorise it? All designers either advocate leaving the neckline bare, which emphasises the dramatic folds of the dress, or wearing over-the-top decoration, such as bold feather boas. The ideal shoes are strappy, high-heeled sandals if the dress is knee-length, or long, slinky boots if the length is longer.

Whatever the decoration, it is a look that is sophisticated and modern, that works for both day and night. A look that has swags of style.



ABOVE: Black diamond devoré dress, £80, Etam, 484 Oxford Street, W1 (0171-494 7732). Black-and-white feather collar, £50, Delphine Pariente, Browns, 24 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-491 7833). Feather hair clip, £25, Johnny Loves Rosie, Fenwicks, New Bond Street, W1 (0171-247 1498). TOP LEFT: Gold print dress, £55, The Collection, Etam, as before. Black-and-cream ankle-to sandals, £49.99, Ravel, 184-188 Oxford Street, W1, and branches (0171-631 0224). Hair clip, as before. Photographs: Richard Burros. Hair and make-up: Sarah Gottschalk, using Glauca Rossi Products (mail order 0171-289 7485). Styling: Amandip Uppal



Red devoré dress, £55, Warehouse (0171-278 3491). Long black jacket, £500, Fien Sud 'Whistles' (0171-487 4464)



Black crêpe dress, £173, Sportmax (0171-267 3434). Black patent ankle boots, £275, Gina (0171-235 2932)

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Gold chain-mail bag, £39, Fenwicks, New Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 9161)



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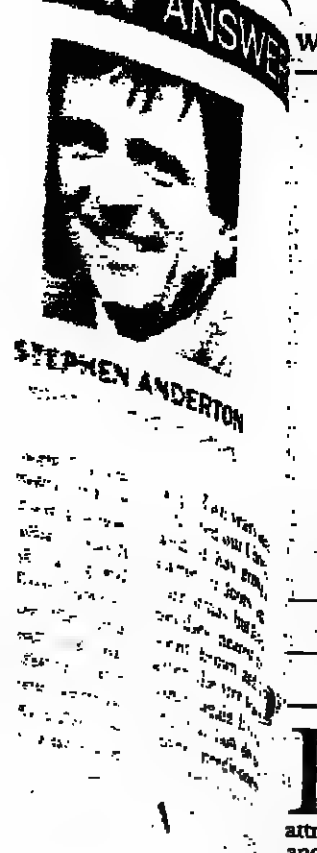
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# Natural call of the wild

Barbara Abbs looks at how formality is giving way to 'greener' havens of native wild flowers and grasses

Having a naturalistic garden does not mean having to live surrounded by deeply unattractive native plants like nettles and goosegrass (cleavers) or snail-harbours. Ecology and conservation have had a significant effect on parks, gardens and open spaces in recent years, and aesthetic considerations such as colour and form have sometimes been lost in the concern for wildlife habitats.

Yet one only has to look at the exciting and sustainable communities of native and introduced plants used in parks and gardens in Holland, Germany and America to realise that this need not be so.

At an international symposium on perennial plants and new trends in planting designs at Kew recently, speakers included academic ecologists, landscape architects and designers of private and public gardens in The Netherlands, America and the UK. Neil Diboll, proprietor of the Prairie Nursery in Wisconsin, began with an inspiring yet practical account of recreating the flora of the American Prairie in a garden setting.

The prairie soils of America are among the richest on the Continent; that is why the prairie flora has been largely replaced by the monoculture of the Corn Belt. Re-establishing it began in the 1830s at the University of Madison in Wisconsin.

Seeing pictures of English cottage gardens in books had made many American gardeners realise that their "weeds" made effective border plants. Bold daisies like echinacea, rudbeckia and helianthus, spikes of solidago and diatia, and especially native grasses, were not considered suitable for gardens until ten years ago.

Now an enthusiasm for ecologically sound native flowers and for "prairie planting" is sweeping



At Cowley Manor, *Echinacea* 'Green Heart', *Deschampsia cespitosa* and *Knautia macedonica* have been used to create more naturalistic, but still colourful, borders

other *heimparks* have come to the notice of private gardeners. Hein Koenig, who is in charge of Amstelveen Parks Department, emphasised that the park, while using native trees and wildflowers, is designed, above all, to be beautiful.

It is far from being a low-maintenance area. The beds are hand-weeded and wild plants are grown in pots and planted out when necessary. Heathers are clipped by hand rather than by machine to keep them compact. In many ways, it is maintained like an old-fashioned private garden.

Naturalistic planting using native perennials is increasing in Britain. There are, however, some particular problems created by our climate. The damp winters, cooler and wetter summers, unexpected late frosts or unusually dry springs, and armies of slugs and snails, can decimate the perennial plants

- ### CHECKLIST
- TO establish naturalistic perennial planting...
  - Clear perennial weeds.
  - Do not over-fertilise.
  - Select the right plants for the soil and situation.
  - Choose grasses that form clumps rather than mats.
  - Plant in the autumn.
  - Mulch to save moisture and prevent germination of annual weeds.

anyone planning to introduce a more naturalistic, wildlife-friendly and lower-maintenance element into their garden without losing the colour, form and variety of the traditional English border.

Successful plants to grow in

grass are semi-evergreen, such as *Veronica olympicum* and many of the geraniums such as *Geranium macrorrhizum* and *G. endressii*. They start into growth early, such as *Lamium orvala* and *Meconopsis cambrica*, or they form big clumps, in the case of *Acanthus longifolius* and the larger polygonums, which keep surrounding grasses at bay.

The perennials do not have to be native plants to look natural and be part of a self-sustaining and exciting group. In the border-plus-grasses, species like *Knautia macedonica*, with deep red scabrous flowers, or *Anemone hepatica*, fit in perfectly, as do cultivars like the soft yellow daisy, *Anthemis 'E.C. Buxton'*.

Grasses in borders should be clump-forming, not turf or mat-forming. Choose *Pennisetum villosum*, the feather top, *Helictotrichon sempervirens*, the blue oat

grass, the semi-evergreen *Bouteloua gracilis*, *Mosquito grass* or *Stipa gigantea*. Golden oats, and avoid *Phalaris arundinacea*, var. *picta*. Gardeners garters, *Leymus arenarius* or *Holcus mollis*, which spread by underground rhizomes, or *Carex pendula*, elegant but much too vigorous.

Carefully planted, a border of mixed herbaceous perennials and grasses can be aesthetically pleasing, easy to maintain and will attract birds and butterflies. It does not need to be rigidly confined to native wild flowers and indigenous grasses. If some of these notions sound familiar, William Robinson's still influential *The Wild Garden*, published in England in 1870, was a plea for a very similar type of planting.

© Cowley Manor, Cowley, near Cheltenham (SE of Cheltenham) off A430 is open every day except Monday and Friday until October 30 (01242 820526).

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# Gadgets take the hell out of high watering

Crushed blooms and wet feet are a thing of the past thanks to hanging-basket tools, writes Stephen Anderton

Among all the rat, sometimes gardening devices come along which are genuinely useful. I include with these the devices for watering hanging baskets.

The principle is simple. A lance with a U-bend, like a walking stick, is attached to a hosepipe. There is an on-off control at the bottom end, and the upper, bent, end is inserted between the plants in the basket to get the water directly into the soil. It saves you getting your feet wet twice a day in hot weather, and you can take comfort in knowing that enough of the water has hit the soil, rather than bouncing off the foliage. No need for ladders, or trips backwards and forwards to the tap with a watering can.

If the water is hitting the soil and not the plants, the plants will look better. There is nothing so sad as busy lizzies with their dead flowers plastered to the leaves with water. In areas where the water is very limey, that too builds up on the foliage to give a soury, tired effect.

When you plant up a hanging basket it is worth bearing the maintenance in mind. If you regularly forget to water your baskets and have to give emergency resuscitation once a week, go for the more forgiving species such as ivy, spider plants and trailing perennials.

Avoid yellow creeping jenny and trailing *Helichrysum petiolare*. The latter may make a good leafy foil for more spectacular flowering plants, but once they have seriously wilted, the grey form and especially the yellow 'Limelight' look miserable and papery until they have grown new leaves.

Think about the deadheading. Some plants, like bidens, verbena and scaevola, can be left to flower all season with no deadheading at all. I like to deadhead vigorously to keep them flowering vigorously into autumn.

This year I have been growing the small-flowered trailing 'Carillon' petunias, and they have been covered in flower since May, with no dead-heading at all. They have a charm and a delicacy quite unlike the chunkier old-fashioned petunias, or even the Surfinia types. (Scarists say they are calliochaos, not petunias at all.) The leaf is small too, and the whole plant low, so it can be used in blend in as



High and dry: the East-Reach (left) and Hi-Lo watering systems

a foil for bigger blooms. If you want to grow hungry and thirsty plants, like fuchsias, in baskets, then it pays to water properly and feed generously all the time.

You may like to use the special hanging-basket composts, which contain moisture-retentive gels, or you can make your own with separately purchased gel granules such as Swel-Gel. Hungry feeders can be given extra feed by occasion-

ally putting an in-line fertiliser diluter on the hose when you water.

Much less trouble is to insert into the compost at planting time one of the bullets of Osmocote slow-release fertiliser, which will dissolve gradually over the season. It is also important, however you intend to water, to make the surface of the compost concave, so the water does not run off before it has

time to sink in. Once the compost is full of roots it will keep its dish shape despite pressures of water from a hose, but at planting time the shape needs exaggerating in the basket, to get it established.

If you dislike spending money on fancy watering lances, there is a distinctly low-tech *Blue Peter* version available, the East-Reach, from Erin (£8).

Like a hollow plastic croquet mallet with an extendable handle, it is dunked into a bucket of water, then lifted up to the basket. The water comes out from perforations at one end, like a sugar sifter. However, as the reservoir is as far as a croquet mallet, I do not see how you water a fully planted basket without the water going all over the leaves, and thence your feet. The beauty of a hose lance is that you can poke it in between plants to reach the soil.

Erin also produce a gadget called the Hi-Lo (£5.99, £9.99 for two), for lowering and raising hanging baskets. It is rather like a butcher's hanging scales, or the pulleys that were used to raise and lower early electric chandeliers.

It is fixed between the basket and its supporting hook, and allows the basket to be pulled down for maintenance and pushed up again.

It extends for 30in, which is just about enough, and will support a maximum weight of 20lb (9kg). That is fully laden weight, with a season's worth of foliage on top, and soaked after a thorough watering. It could be very useful.

But it is not just useful for watering, but for having a close look at the plants, too. Plants need deadheading and constant care: plants in baskets are if anything more prone to pests and diseases than plants in the ground or even large pots, because life in a basket is always tough. Buffeting winds, hot roots, competition for root-run, periodic sludgings of water instead of a constant supply in the ground, are all reasons for making a plant stressed.

And it is always the weak and the stressed which succumb to diseases.

So be kind to your baskets. Water them regularly, in the cool of morning or evening, and get an enquiring nose in there as often as the hosepipe.



Freshen up: applying water direct to the compost in hanging baskets avoids crushing flowers

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## A Queen Anne mansion with a chapel and romantic folly: just the house for a footballer



Transfer list: Colin Lee and his wife Linda are moving on to new pastures after spending more than £200,000 renovating 38-room Hanch Hall

## Time to move the goalposts

If you are in the vicious business of pigeonholing people, then footballers, like politicians, hairdressers and train spotters are easy, easy prey. Smirk at their glamour-model girlfriends, raise your eyebrows at their mock-Tudor mansions and tut-tut at the mahogany finish on their reproduction dining-room suite.

Happily, Colin Lee — Chelsea and Spurs striker, now assistant manager of Wolves — is safe from such naïve reductionism. Lee is the exception that does not prove the rule: he does not wear sheepskin, smoke didgeridoo-sized pufflers or have a timeshare in Portugal.

He lives in a 38-room, Grade II listed, Queen Anne-fronted manor house near Lichfield, Staffordshire, subtly restored by him, his wife Linda and two well-chosen interior designers. What is more, he is charming, articulate, relaxed and may well be The Nicest Man in Football.

Sitting with Lee in his blood-red, oak-finished billiard room — where he and his 15-year-old son Marc seem to spend a lot of their time — despite the football memorabilia tucked away in the cabinets sur-

rounding us, pitch talk is quickly substituted in favour of DIY tips.

He and his wife have spent more than £200,000 on the house, and when push comes to shove, although Lee is far too much of a gentleman for that sort of behaviour, it becomes obvious that he would rather be insulating the roof, amending antiques, digging in the garden or feeding his peacocks than discussing the form of the Wolves youth team.

The Lees have been at Hanch Hall for about 19 months. They bought the property for £600,000 and it is now on the market at £900,000. Having put in so much work they are sad to leave but feel they would prefer somewhere smaller. It has not been an easy decision: "We sat down with the children and discussed why the time was right," he says.

Lee is a family man and Hanch Hall is a family home, so he does not have the team to stay at weekends, just regular friends and relatives. "No, that's work, I like to leave it behind." Although "the guy who does the Wolves kit comes down quite a lot," he says. Boggle-eyed guests can



The grounds feature a 40ft high folly replicating Lichfield Cathedral and its three spires

recline on swallow-you-up sofas in the Queen Anne sitting room and watch *Match of the Day* (or *The Antiques Roadshow*) on the industrial-sized television.

And after draining the best bottles in the cellar (it took the previous owner two days to move his supply), there is no shortage of pillow space for

wooly heads. Snuggler up the Jacobean-style staircase, past the stained-glass windows which depict the family crests of the previous owners, and you will find ten bedrooms, some with their own bathrooms and sitting rooms. An extraordinary Victorian shell collection is tucked away

in the newly renovated Victorian wing — "I've been to so many auctions and never seen anything like it," he says.

As the oldest, 15th-century end, in the William Orme room, the mantels display a fine selection of valuable biscuit jars ("look, this one is great, worth about £150").

The house is set in 20 acres encompassing stables, formal gardens, a paddock, chapel and parkland and tea-rooms, although these are no longer open to the public.

Crawling around the side of the lake is a grand folly: a recreation of Lichfield Cathedral that the previous owners had reconstructed. It might sound like something Rachel Whiteread would cook up during her retirement years. But nestled, rather like the Lady of Shalott's tower in between the undergrowth, down by the water, it is as quiet, homely and unpretentious as the house itself.

Hanch Hall could never be an essential buy and it is too romantic and rambling to be a necessity, but I can think of worse places to put out my welcome mat.

ALEX O'CONNELL

### MANAGERS' DREAM HOMES



**GERRY FRANCIS**, the manager of Tottenham Hotspur, pictured outside his house in Bagshot, Surrey. The property was recently valued at £600,000. Francis shares the family home with the other great love of his life, pigeons.



**BOBBY ROBSON** lives in a Spanish villa among palm-tree lined avenues and only a two-minute walk from the beach. It's one of the perks of being the general manager at Barcelona. The villa is beautifully decorated and has a large swimming pool.



**RON ATKINSON**, the former manager at Coventry City, lives in style in a mock-Tudor country mansion in the village of Baint Green, Worcestershire. The beautiful house, described by many as a dream home, was targeted by burglars last year.

### PROPERTY PROFILE: HAMPSHIRE

**Attractions:** Confirmed yachters flock to the Solent, with many favouring villages around Lymington. Commuters benefit from frequent trains to Waterloo — about an hour from Winchester. The M3, A3 and A303 provide links to the Midlands, the North and West. Brockenhurst and Lyndhurst in the New Forest are much sought after, as are Hambledon, Droxford and Exton in the Meon Valley. Crawley, Littleton and Sparsholt draw many parents of those at Winchester's private schools.

**The market:** Prices have risen by an average of 16 per cent so far this year, with increases of 30 per cent in sought-after locations such as villages around Alton, and in parts of the Meon Valley, says Hampton International. Humberts, in Petersfield, says activity has increased by about 33 per cent over the past year and has doubled in the £300,000 to £1 million bracket. Lane Fox in Winchester has 1,000 applicants for properties over £300,000. Expect to pay: From £200,000 to £300,000 for a three-bedroomed cottage; £350,000 to £700,000 for a

farmhouse with some land, and £750,000 to £1.5 million for a medium-sized country house, says Lane Fox. Cluttons, in Romsey, says 90 per cent of its applicants are looking for a period country house with about five acres. Lane Fox estimates that 75 per cent of buyers are from London, and like John D. Wood, finds many are prepared to pay well over guide prices.

**Significant sale:** Chilbolton Cottage in Winchester, built in the 1930s, has just been sold by John D. Wood for more than £350,000, well in excess of the guide price. A property to watch out for is a modest semi in Little Hayes Lane, Ichen Abbas, near Winchester, home to Mark Oaten, the Liberal Democrat MP for Winchester. John D. Wood is asking £180,000.

**Outlook:** Humberts reckons prices will increase by 5 to 10 per cent between now and next June. Lane Fox says interest rate rises and the budget have dampened the market a little.

AMANDA LOOSE

© Next Saturday's property profile: Norfolk

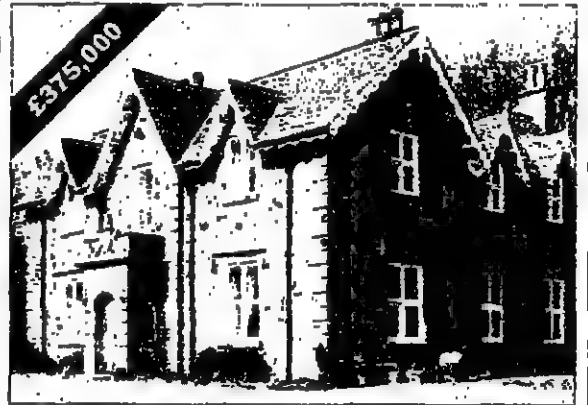
### MOVES

#### What the same money will buy around the country

House-price increases of 16 per cent in Greater London during the past year have yet to spread to the rest of the country. Although prices in the South East are keeping up, the ripple of prosperity begins to falter the further away from London you are. In the South West, for example, prices have increased by 6 per cent, according to the Halifax. In the North, average prices have gone up by only 2 per cent. Some areas of London have risen by considerably more than 16 per cent. "We have not noticed a pronounced ripple effect; Greater London is atypical," a Halifax spokesman says. "And we anticipate that in 1998, as the supply of houses increases, prices will subside a little."



This refurbished one-bedroom charming pied-à-terre in Rutland Street, London SW7, will set you back £375,000. (Kear: Cardale Groves, 0171-581 0155.)



Or you could buy Scargill Lodge (£375,000), a classic six-bedroom, four-bathroom country house in 4.5 acres on the edge of the moors, near Barnard Castle, Co. Durham. The prize includes a self-contained cottage, a range of stables and outbuildings and a tennis court. (Stutt & Parker, 01423 561274.)



For the same amount (£375,000), you could buy South Yard Farm, an historic Grade II listed medieval farmhouse in 136 acres of agricultural land and woodland, near South Molton, north Devon. It comes with dairy, pump house, former cider house, former stables, a range of Grade II listed traditional farm buildings and a modern covered yard. (Stutt & Parker, 01392 215631.)

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THANKS to the response by readers of *The Times* (Join the great elm hunt, June 21), 130 hitherto unknown healthy elms, including one believed to be the tallest in Britain, have been added to the Conservation Foundation's index of trees that have escaped infection by Dutch elm disease.

The foundation suspects the surviving trees may have immunity to the disease which has killed an estimated 25 million elms since the 1960s, and it plans to take cuttings from the best 70 specimens and

## Secret survivors of the Dutch elm devastation

plant them out as part of an ambitious programme which it hopes could eventually restore the elm to rural Britain. The disease is still endemic and kills emerging suckers when they reach 20 feet, at about seven to ten years old.

Not all the sample leaves sent in by *Times* readers were elm; some were lime and hazel. However, two enormous trees were discovered. Philip Clarkson Webb found the largest specimen so far found in the United Kingdom standing among

a line of enormous limes at Leeds Castle in Kent. "It is in the best of health," he says. "Perhaps the fact that it was surrounded by limes meant the beetle didn't find it. Or perhaps the smell of the lime put off the beetle."

Fergus Kinmonth, a tree surgeon working for the Conservation Foundation, has taken cuttings from another elm, almost as tall, discovered at Castle Priori in Norfolk (above) and will be planting them near the parent tree

to take advantage of any beneficial environmental factors.

Normally it would be 15 to 20 years before the elms which grow from the cuttings can be presumed safe from infection by the still active disease. However, we may know long before then what sets these trees apart. Thanks to a separate European Union-funded project, these new specimens will be tested to establish whether they do have some innate resistance to disease. Watch this space — and keep us posted if you find other examples.

chest height (between 1 and 1.5 metres from the ground) — that appears to have survived Dutch elm disease. Send details, including grid reference, with a leaf sample to: The Conservation Foundation, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR (0171-991 3111; fax 0171-991 3122).

### ADOPT ME



Amy is house-trained

AMY, a three-year-old black greyhound, is fully house-trained and would be happy in a home without cats or young children, with an owner who has the time to give her a caring home. Contact The RSPCA, South Godstone: 01422 893117.

PATCH may not be able to wag her tail, as it is paralysed, but this nine-year-old Labrador-cross is an extremely happy spayed bitch who is longing for a home with loving owners. Her previous owner moved into a town-house — hence Patch's move to us.



Patch can't wag her tail

The image of the loyal, hard-working collie is being destroyed by unsuitable owners, say two experts

## Give a dog a bad name

Jennie Booth of the Border Collie Trust in Staffordshire has just been summoned to pick up yet another unwanted dog from Wales — two adults and two pups. "You can't find a home for collies in Wales nowadays," she says. "You might well try alligators and get more luck."

Every year Jennie Booth's rescue organisation takes in some 350 Border collies and sheepdogs — Border collies being pedigree strains of the original working sheepdog — and has to turn away the same number. Nationwide, other rescue centres — including those run by the main animal charities — are having to deal with thousands more.

What has gone wrong with this noble native breed so popularly portrayed on *One Man And His Dog*? Jennie believes that both over-breeding and over-high expectations of how readily a dog genetically programmed to work can adapt to life as a pet could be to blame.

"The fact is," she says, "you can get collies too easily. People see them as the one recognisable breed you can get on the cheap. You can pick up a pup at farm gates for £50 with no questions asked. You might think you're getting a Border collie, but just as likely you're getting a collie-type or collie-cross mongrel of unknown quality."

Quite a few people, adds Jennie, "have this strange notion that collies come ready-trained. They don't appreciate that the dogs they see on TV have been brought on by experienced handlers for years. They also don't realise that, because collies are very active, intelligent and sensitive dogs, they can soon go wrong if not in the right hands."

"They need plenty of exercise and mental stimulation. Something to

do and something to think about. And if they don't get this on a regular basis, they'll just go nuts."

When collies "go nuts", it seems, they can do so quite spectacularly: ripping up home fittings, displaying frustrated bouts of aggression and hotly herding and pursuing, in the absence of sheep, any other moving target from a Lada to a lawnmower.

When this happens with pet collies, despairing owners often turn to Barbara Sykes, in Yorkshire, for expert advice. Barbara, who runs the Mainline Border Collie Training Centre as well as her own sheep farm, has bred and worked thousands of collies over the past 30 years. Now she is much in demand to sort out collies brought to her as "problem pets".

Barbara believes that a successful, well-adjusted pet collie is "about 60 per cent to do with good breeding and 40 per cent to do with good ownership". But, she adds: "With nearly all the dogs I see, it's the owners who are the problem. I've had owners who have spent a fortune on behaviourists, or who have had the dogs on beta-blockers to calm them down."

"They seem surprised when the problems can be solved by something as straightforward as a change in diet and better basic training."

Collies, agree Jennie and Barbara, can be uniquely rewarding when their work-driven psyches are understood and their physical and mental needs are adequately met.

Not only is early training for these very bright and strong-willed dogs essential, they say, but the need to convey effective but never aggressive leadership.

As with all dogs, the ones with

best family pet potential are likely to have been raised in a domestic environment where there was plenty of early socialisation with other people, children and dogs. The dog's parents should have neither nervous nor aggressive temperaments.

Jennie doesn't think collies suit families with children under five years of age. "All the screaming and running around can provoke an over-excited pursuit by the dog."

Also unsuitable is a home where the dog is likely to be left on its own for more than four hours.

The next couple of months, Christmas apart, are her busiest: "All the people who have bought collie pups off farms on holiday start to get bored with them or decided they're too much to cope with. But they won't say that. They'll say maybe the child has got eczema or asthma and is allergic. Or they can't afford it. Or they're emigrating — tomorrow. That's always a good one."

Often, when it comes to collecting collies, says Jennie, "you can feel the IQ is on the wrong end of the lead."

But there will always be others who will appreciate what they are acquiring: "I've had dogs come to us off farms who've had absolutely nothing in their lives, and gone on to make loving family pets. I've had dogs out of the gutter go on to become top sniffer experts. When that sort of thing happens it makes you feel good — like what you're doing is ultimately worthwhile."

### CAROL PRICE

● The Border Collie Trust (01889 57053) continually needs new homes for dogs and funding support. Barbara Sykes, at the Mainline Border Collie Training Centre, can be contacted on 01244 564163. For breeding advice, call: The Border Collie Club of Great Britain (01783 664619).



A change in diet and basic training can change a collie's behaviour

### PETS

## A vet writes

Q Recently you wrote about hot-weather hazards and the dangers of over-long exposure to sunlight, but you didn't say anything about drought and how we can help animals — especially wild ones — when it's hot and everywhere is dried up. Would you repair this omission?

A Water is vital. Life can't go on without it. It's easy — and inexpensive — to help wild creatures during a drought. A couple of plastic washing-up bowls, a shallow baking tin, some pebbles and a brick is all that's needed. Fill the first washing bowl with water to just cover the brick. This is the big-birds' pond. They can bathe in it, drink from it and then take off from the brick, which is an effective non-slip runway. And tiny birds can perch on the brick and drink their fill.

The second washing bowl is intended for the tiny birds. The water should just cover the pebbles, so creating dozens of little pools an inch or so deep. This will give the small species and baby birds plenty of water to drink, although not enough for them to fall into and drown. Bees will use it as their watering hole too (honey-making is a thirsty business).

The baking tin is for hedgehogs, frogs and toads, the family tortoise and mice, voles, rats and squirrels. Sink it in the soil, so the edges of the tin are at ground level and use a bit of gravel or sand to make a shallow end. Then small creatures can drink, wallow in the water and, if necessary, climb out via the sandy beach. Keep the water levels topped up and, if a lot of bathing goes on, clean out and empty the bowls every few days to remove feathers and droppings.

Our cherished cat died

last April of feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) infection. She had been vaccinated against Feline leukaemia (FeLV), but we're told there's no vaccine against FIV. We want to get a kitten, or half-grown cat, possibly from a rescue home. We intend to ask for blood tests first, to make sure the new-comer is not infected. But how long will the virus live in the house? All our old cat's bedding, bowls and grooming equipment have been destroyed, but we can't fit new carpets and curtains. What do you advise?

A The various feline viruses — and there are several — don't live long outside the cat, and after three months any traces of infection will have disappeared. Infection usually arises from mother cat — either before birth or while the kitten is suckling — or when cats live in colony conditions, close together.

Household pets are less likely to catch one of these viruses. So there's an increased risk of infection in a "rescue" cat, and blood testing would not give an accurate result until a few weeks after infection had occurred. I don't think a cat-rescue home would be enthusiastic about blood tests. No responsible welfare society could rehoming a cat known to be infected.

Look for a kitten from a pet cat — ideally from a house full of children. Kittens that have been handled in the first few weeks of life are always better socialised than those born in barns or warehouses. Vaccinate, of course, and don't worry too much. FIV is very rare and FeLV is not common.

### JAMES ALLCOCK

Write to *The Times* Vet, Weekend, *The Times*, Pennington Street, London E1 9KN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.

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عكذا من الأصل



Holidaying with my parents has made me into the disruptive adolescent that I may possibly have been last time we were all together

## I might sulk for ever. So there

LIFE AND SOUL



JANE SHILLING

Oh dear, oh dear, sitting here under the brilliant, enamel blue Devon sky, within sight of the ultramarine Devon sea, the waves breaking in the distance and the sun beating down nicely, I wonder what on earth possessed me to think that a family holiday would be a good idea.

My sister, I know, would have counselled urgently against it, if only I had consulted her. Which I did not, on account of the fact that we have hardly spoken since the last family holiday, some 20 years ago. On that occasion, she took it into her head to wedge open the window of our shared hotel room with my copy of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, which was then rendered unreadable by a sudden shower during supper. Criminal negligence, said I. Act of God, said she. We did not, I think, actually come to blows, but the incident left both of us with a pronounced aversion to Spending Time With Our Family—until now.

On the morning I was to set off for the West Country, my son's godmother telephoned so early that I thought it must be the police, ringing with news of a Tragic Incident. "I wanted to catch you

before you left," she said. An awkward pause. Then: "You know, if you find you need some time to yourself, there is always our cottage. It's quite close. You could pop over and see your parents and Alexander every day, if you wanted."

"What a kind thought," I said, laughing dismissively. "But I'm sure it won't be necessary. Alexander adores his grandparents. It'll be lovely, you'll see."

"Hmm," said my son's godmother, who knows me better than I do myself. "Here's the caretaker's number, just in case."

In the five years since we have been taking holidays together, my son has proved an ideal travelling companion. Unlike the various adults who have from time to time joined us on vacation, he is not subject to our sickness, sun stroke, mood swings, irrational fear of wasps or a tiresome obsession with culture. Still, brilliantly successful as our joint excursions have been until now, the motto of the Shilling family has always been

"you're not here to enjoy yourself".

Blood will out, you know, and I suppose I must have felt it was time for Alexander to experience for himself some of the things that have left my sister and myself with such indeleble memories of our childhood holidays—the thunderous rows, the impetuous sulks, the Borgia-like shifting of inter-family alliances. Rather less altruistically, it had occurred to me that while Alexander's attention was occupied by his grandparents, whose tolerance for reading aloud from the vapid adventures of *Thomas The Tank Engine* far exceeds my own, I might get on with the novel by Nicholas Mosley which I began in the

summer of 1991 and have since had no opportunity to finish. The one thing I had not realised when, months ago, I set in motion the plans for what struck me as a masterpiece of enlightened self-interest, is that the relationship between your parents and your child is nature's ingenious method of punishing you for your own failures as a parent and deficiencies as a child. Left to ourselves, my son and I are accustomed to regard me as a very considerable figure—an authority on all sorts of things, from the workings of the solar system (so the Sun goes round the Earth, you see, like this) to the supplies carried by Scott of the Antarctic on his

famous expedition ("lots and lots of lovely fruit and hardly any sweets at all and he always ate up the yellow bits of his eggs").

However, my parents (or grandma and grandpa, as these days I seem to call them) appear oddly disposed to treat me as the feckless and disruptive adolescent that I may possibly have been last time we were all on holiday together. What they do not seem to realise is that, in the course of the ensuing two decades, I have turned into a grown-up, just like them.

Now, it is true that the manner of my arrival at the cottage may have been less than ideal—what with my parents being such demons for a nice early night and my departure from London having been unavoidably delayed until gone tea-time by a long lunch and an animated discussion of the England collapse at Hedingley, I can see that being woken at midnight by the sound of me pounding irritably on the

door may have been the cause of some consternation.

And probably my greeting should have included some kind of apology rather than a bitter complaint about the mud on the black satin ballet shoes I had bought that morning in a sale.

It was also jolly unlucky that, just as the whole house had settled back to sleep, it should have been woken again by the Devon police asking, very courteously, if I would kindly move my car which I had somehow parked so that it was blocking emergency access to the entire valley.

But this is the kind of unfortunate combination of circumstances that could befall absolutely anybody, and I feel very strongly that the words "dizzy" and "completely hopeless" were quite inappropriate in the context. So inappropriate, in fact, that I am now going to my room to play my Leonard Cohen tapes really, really loudly. And I think I shall slam the door once or twice as well, just to show the extent of my displeasure. I am not coming out until tea-time, you know. Or maybe even supper-time. In fact, if I hear Alexander say "silly mummy" once more, I might even not come out ever again. So there.

## Bring back the school nit-picker

The return of an old problem has everybody scratching their heads

W estminster is a strange conspiracy. An MP can be the most published figure in the land, loved or loathed by millions, but once past the policemen guarding the heavy swing doors that admit to the Commons, no special head is paid to members as they queue indifferently for cups of tea or an order paper.

Except this week, when I have noticed MPs, new and old, Labour and Tory, doing a slight swerve or keeping a little distance from me as I bustled about my business. Was it something I had done?

My speeches so far this parliament have been on issues like helping exports, freedom of information and international economics. They were made to a largely empty chamber leaving the nation wholly indifferent.

My only mentions in the national press were to do with plutonium flights over constituency and my opposition to the BBC's attempts to dumb down Radio 4 by reading about yesterday in Parliament.

I wear no after-shave and although Matthew Parris, every MP's compulsive read, has commented more than once on my lack of colour co-ordination, my suits, shirts and ties are conventional. So why were my colleagues taking care to avoid me?

The answer is that I mentioned the word "nits" in Parliament. "A louse in the locks of literature" was one 19th-century insult exchanged between writers and to raise the subject of head lice in the Commons was to shake the sensibility of Honourable Members to core.

In an anonymous exchange with Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, about the need for better medical education in schools, I mentioned that the country has suffered from a plague of head lice and nits in recent months.

Both Frank and I are, in the popular cliché, folkie challenged, and in my case the attentions of the excellent Commons' barber, Mr Stephen Silvera, have ensured that there is very little hair on my head for any louse to nestle in. But I have watched with irritation as my daughters have returned home month after month infested with nits.



Inner city schools have been plagued by an infestation of head lice which struck in winter and has carried on into the summer months

Their primary school in inner London is excellent, with a dynamic head whose leadership in setting academic standards, and pastoral care cannot be faulted. But he also has been driven mad by a plague of nits which arrived in mid-winter and has carried on until the summer holidays.

I have come home to see the girls sitting with greasy hair on their heads and a towel around their shoulders as my wife grimly combs through their hair searching for the tiny white eggs. Both she and I have shampooed our own hair with anti-nit shampoo.

Yet within a week or two the girls—one nine, one seven—would start scratching again. Gently they examined each other's heads searching for the nits and they settled down to the shampoo routine almost

on a weekly basis. I talked to the head, who told me that cuts in funding had made it difficult to get a school nurse who could act as a nit hunter and identify the child or children whose parents were ignoring the letters sent by the head telling us to inspect our children's hair and not allow children to come to school if they had nits or lice.

My wife is part-French and convinced that the weak low-grade chemicals used in the English nit shampoo were not up to the job, compared with the full-strength chemical warfare parents let loose upon head lice across the Channel.

But as I talked with friends who had children I found that it was not simply the

MacShane family or one London school that was infected. In my constituency in South Yorkshire I noticed the increasing number of schoolboys who affected an almost shaven head, which is a brutal response to the nits question. Conservative MPs who send their children to private schools told me the problem was far worse there, so the presence of nits and the payment of large cheques does not solve the problem.

British parents now work the longest hours in the modern world, so perhaps they don't have time to read and implement the instructions in the lice letters from schools.

But as the reaction of my fellow MPs showed, the very mention of lice and nits provokes a reflex shudder of disgust. How many parents

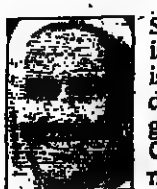
have simply ignored the requests to inspect children's hair and spend the tedious time shampooing and using a fine tooth comb inch by inch?

In his reply to me, Frank Dobson called for a return of the "nit-nurse" to schools and as I sat down a number of MPs said to me: "Well done. It's a real problem and a good job you raised it."

Up to a point. I still think what I have to say on the world economy is more important but if, from time to time, an MP can raise an issue that is actually causing people up and down the country, of all classes, to scratch their heads, then I suppose we earn our pay.

DENIS MACSHANE  
● Denis MacShane is MP for Rotherham and has four children

## An enclave where tradition thrives



ST MARY'S Walmer is the archetypal parish church which, in defiance of the harbingers of doom in the Church of England, not only continues to exist but is thriving.

And, what is more, it thrives without the Toronto Blessing, hand waving and songbook excesses of some modern evangelicalism, and with a liturgy based largely on the 1980 *Alternative Service Book*.

The parish newsletter advertises choir practice, drop-in coffee mornings, teas and bric-a-brac sales. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, a regular churchgoer and sometime resident of near by Walmer Castle, was in church here the week before.

St Mary's is one of three in the group, and there is a healthy rivalry between the churches. Over coffee after the service, a worshipper stopped and said: "Why don't you come to the Old Church, it's really lovely, the Queen Mother was there last year." This beautiful, small 12th-

Ruth Gledhill visits a Victorian church that has avoided change for change's sake



Rev Bruce Hawkins: benevolent

century church is still used for a weekday service, and for candle-lit communion on saints' days.

Minutes later, another came by. "Are you coming to St Saviour's for the 11 o'clock?" This, another small and beautiful church, was where

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Henry Wilberforce, youngest son of slavery abolitionist William Wilberforce, was once curate.

But we were content to be at St Mary's, a large, Victorian edifice atop the town, where the Reverend Bruce Hawkins presides over his congrega-

tion, like some benevolent patriarch. His curate, the Reverend Mark Griffin, played a prominent role in our service. One of three readers, Diane Deer, was our preacher.

We were in Walmer on a personal pilgrimage to see the latest horticultural creation of Penelope Hobhouse, a 19th-century walled garden at Walmer Castle, the Queen Mother's official residence as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and where she has made annual visits since becoming Lord Warden in 1978. The garden, English Heritage's first new modern garden, is a gift to the Queen Mother to mark her 95th birthday. It will eventually be scented by roses, regale lilies and rosemary.

The church service set the mood. "Let us remember that God is with us now, there is no place where God is not," we prayed. "Help us, O God, to live this day quietly, peacefully, to lean on your strength trustfully, restfully, to face every task confidently, courageously."

● St Mary's Walmer, St Clare Road, Walmer, Kent, CT14 7QA (01304 366605).

### TREATING LICE

ALTHOUGH head lice know no class barriers, they are more likely to be found in the hair of old-style socialists than in that of the new Labour, Conservative or traditional trade unionists.

Any preference exhibited by the lice for one political group or another is not related to the victim's home conditions, nor does it imply any lack of cleanliness in the communal brush in the working-men's club cloakroom, but is related to differing hairstyles.

The wild, Byronic locks and beards of the traditional left-wing provide a better haven for lice than does hair which has been clipped and regularly washed by Trumpers of Curzon Street. The shorter the hair, the easier it is to comb efficiently, whereas once the nits of lice are attached to matted hair, they can defy every effort to comb them out. In some areas, infestations have increased from 5 per cent to 15 per cent in the past year and the number of prescriptions quadrupled between 1991 and 1996.

WHEN lice are established, it is necessary to use one of the pesticides, and most local authorities operate a rotating policy so as to prevent the insects becoming resistant to a particular lotion or shampoo. Lindane, which was once the preparation of choice, is now rarely used, because of the emergence of widespread resistance to it by lice, and because there is a fear that it may cause side effects. Malathion and Carbaryl are now the chosen insecticides.

Two other chemicals, Promethrin and Phenothrin, are often recommended, although lice develop some resistance to both. Lotions are preferred to shampoos, because shampoos are not on the hair long enough to be effective. The lotion is applied to dry hair, rubbed into the scalp, allowed to dry, combed out, and then, 12 hours later, the hair is washed and vigorously combed when dry.

Short hair, regularly brushed and constantly combed, helps to keep lice at bay. Lice are infectious, and everyone should realise that the communal brush and comb are as likely to carry nits in the Houses of Parliament or Reform Club as they are in the most rundown inner-city school.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFFORD

The head louse glues its eggs to the shafts of hairs and only thorough combing and strong pesticides will remove them. Doctors' prescriptions against lice have quadrupled in the past years



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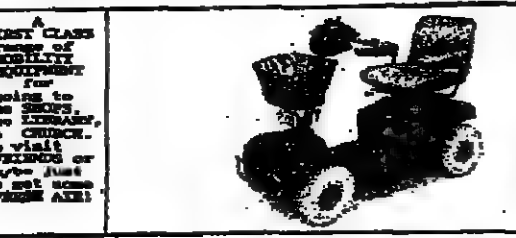
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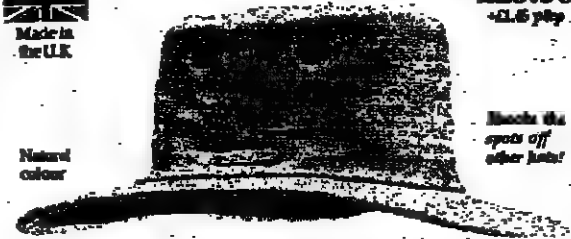
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Emergency ward that treats sick cars with care

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# CAR 97

Girl who gives a plug for a track veteran

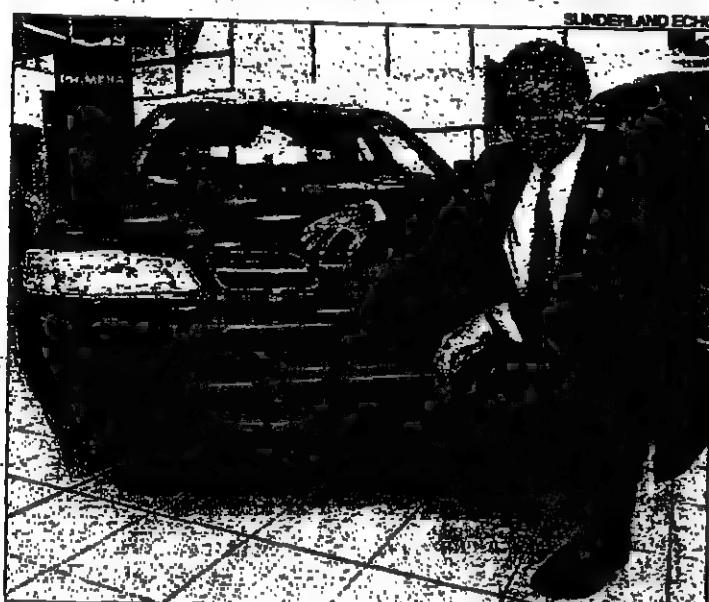
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SATURDAY AUGUST 2 1997

## Carmaking simply isn't British

An official Nissan for Tony Blair might cause outrage, but 'Made in the UK' no longer means anything because the real owners are foreign, says Kevin Eason



Kemp: Japanese carmakers have made his constituency boom

As a gesture of support for the British car industry, it would seem between the impractical and the impractical. Tony Blair would have to be pictured leaving Downing Street in a two-seater Morgan — hardly the practical choice of a Prime Minister — or £135,000 worth of Rolls-Royce Silver Spur, not quite the image new Labour is trying to project.

But what if the official car waiting outside the ministerial gates was a Nissan or a Toyota? For ministers are ready to bow to a campaign to put Japanese cars on their official list for the first time. The decision will prompt howls of protest among the motoring xenophobes who will insist that a nation should boast of its achievements by using official cars which bear only British names. Fine... except that there are no UK-owned mass manufacturers left.

Fraser Kemp is telling the xenophobes that everything a Rover can do, a Nissan can. Putting Japanese cars on to the government car fleet is merely a sad recognition that the nation no longer has a truly indigenous mass manufacturer.

Kemp, new MP for Houghton and Washington East, says: "The British choice comes down to sports cars or models which are so luxurious there is not much chance of using them as daily transport on the government car fleet. Tony Blair could drive a Morgan, but it seems unlikely."

With Nissan's huge car plant in his north-eastern constituency, Kemp says it is time for Britain to recognise that the traditional names have been joined by Japanese newcomers with as much right to be described as domestic manufacturers.

Toyota, Honda and Nissan will be making close to half of all the cars produced in this country by the turn of the century — around 800,000 — employing tens of thousands of workers in their factories and associated suppliers. They buy hundreds of millions of pounds worth of components here and employ thousands more in showrooms and workshops.

Nissan has invested around £1.5 billion in this country and next year could make up to 300,000 cars at

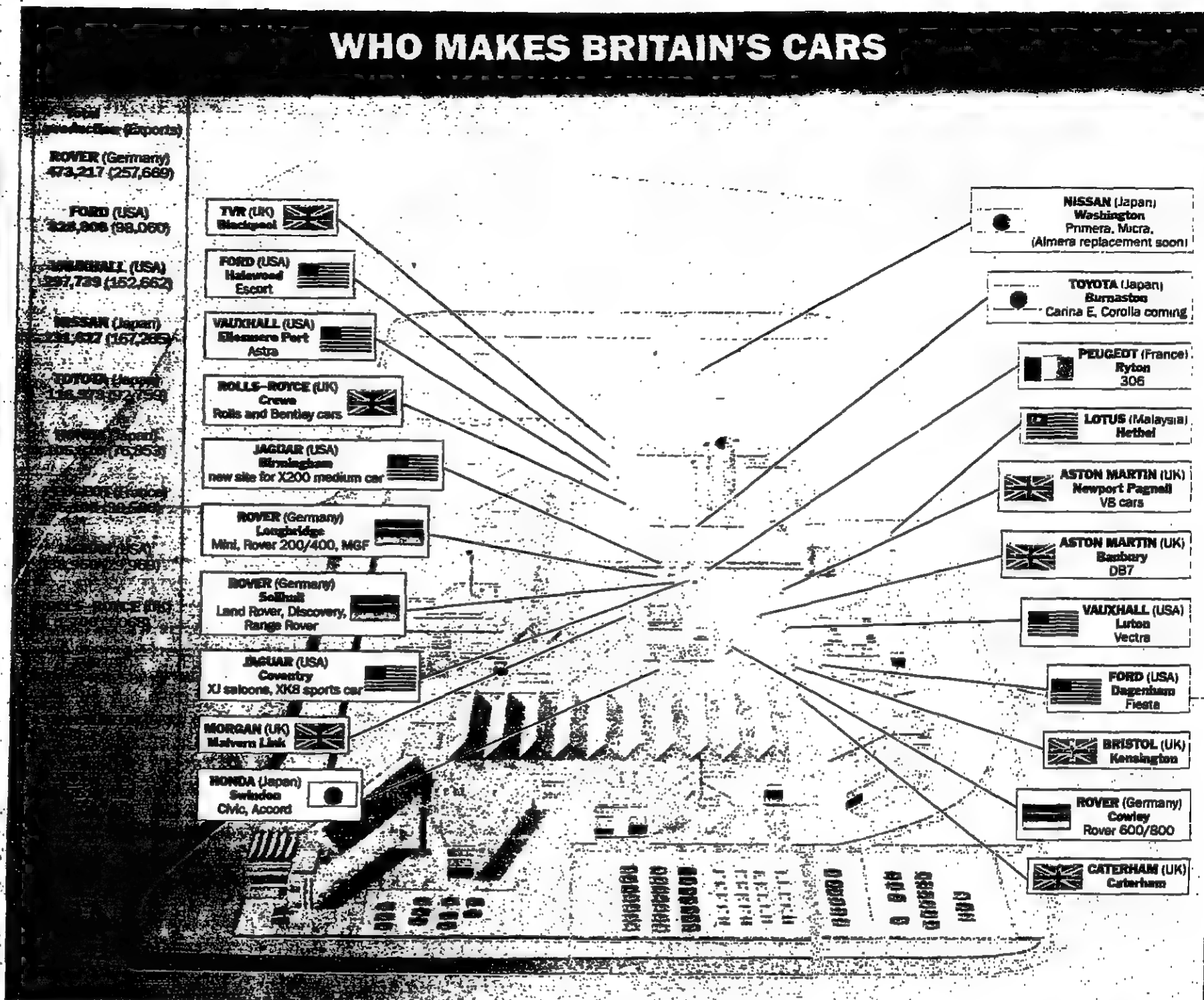
Washington — ready to take the position from Vauxhall as the nation's third biggest carmaker, manufacturing almost as many cars as Ford at Halewood or Mercedes at Dagenham in Essex.

There is a huge difference in perception in British minds between Nissan and a company such as Ford though. Ford started manufacturing here in 1911 and undoubtedly claims a place in British history built up over the decades which brought us the Anglia, Cortina, Consul, Escort and Sierra.

But national affections have no place in worldwide motorising empires, and British factories are just as vulnerable as a plant in Timbuktu if the bosses in the United States decide they have to make cars. The special "hands across the sea" relationship lasts only as long as the books balance, as workers at Halewood found out this year when they were told they would not be making the new Escort, the successor to the plant's mainstay model and a car regarded as so utterly British that it seems unimaginable it should come from abroad. But in Ford's range, only the Escort and Fiesta are currently made here: the Scorpio, Mondeo, Maverick, Probe, Ka and new Puma are all imports.

Blair's family transport is a Galaxy people-mover designed in Germany and made in Spain, but because it carries the traditional blue oval badge there has been barely a whisper of discontent over the Prime Minister driving a foreign-made vehicle. Imagine the outraged spluttering over the sherry in the Home Counties if the Blairs had decided they would prefer to take the children to school in a Mercedes M-class. Yet the origins of the Galaxy and the Mercedes are effectively the same: designed abroad, made abroad — and with the profits ultimately going abroad.

Blair's official car is a Jaguar Sovereign, made in Coventry but by a company owned and controlled directly by Ford from Dearborn in the US. Ministers travel by Rover 800, designed in partnership



### Who's next for the buy-out?

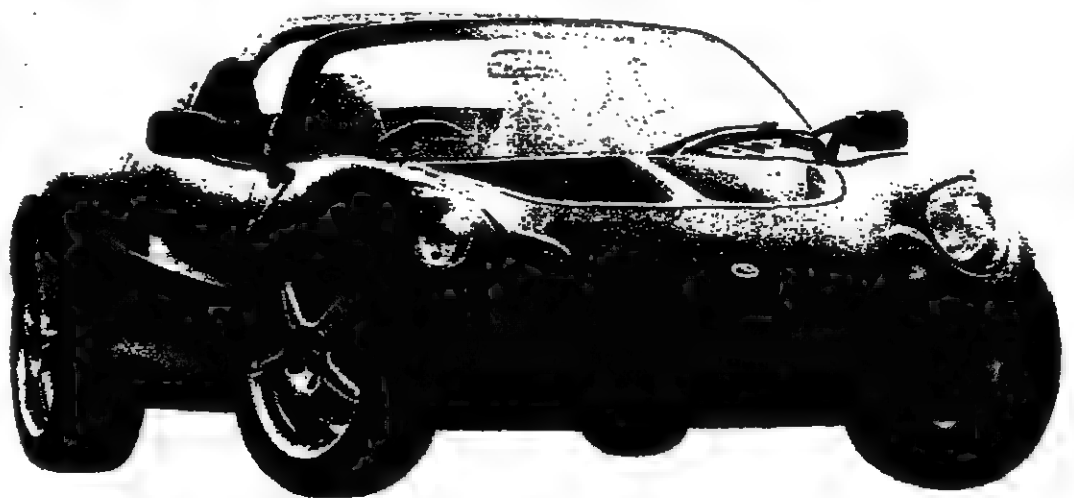
THEY have gone one after the other, like a bargain boot sale of all that is best in British industry. The question is which one will be next at the top of an in-tray in the acquisitions office of a company in Detroit, Munich or Tokyo.

Finding an independent British carmaker is tougher than finding an Englishman in the Premier League. They exist, but as little more than a cottage industry against the backdrop of a massive operation churning out more than 1 million cars every year.

Rolls-Royce is the biggest independent, owned by the defence conglomerate Vickers, but for how much longer? The company is using BMW-designed engines for its next generation cars and, in spite of denials, it seems destiny that Rolls will join Rover as the prestige arm of the Munich carmaker. Lotus, a venerable name but now little more than a curiosity on the motoring map on which names appear and disappear as the decades pass, unable to grow from idea to mass manufacturer under the buffering from the multi-billion pound world of the modern motor industry.

Other minnows, such as TVR and Morgan, have remained fam-

ily-controlled until now and part of their charm lies in their independence and quirky character. There are dozens more companies like them but too small to mention, from kit car manufacturers to Bristol, a venerable name but now little more than a curiosity on the motoring map on which names appear and disappear as the decades pass, unable to grow from idea to mass manufacturer under the buffering from the multi-billion pound world of the modern motor industry.



The Elise was Lotus's most successful car, but now the company is owned by Proton of Malaysia



BIKE 97 SUMMER SPECIAL

BRITAIN'S bikers are the fastest-growing army on the roads. To celebrate the fun of life on two wheels, CAR 97 this week begins a summer special of features and competitions. August will be biker month in *The Times*, starting with this weekend's World Superbike Championships at Brands Hatch, where spectators will include more than 200 readers of CAR 97 as well as Richard Humber of London who is enjoying a day at the races as our special guest. There is more to come, with scooters — which are rapidly becoming the commuter's favourite transport — and the latest superbike to win over the next few weeks. Start our summer special of biking on page 3.

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129 MPV



Labour has talked grandly of developing an integrated transport policy, but it has done no such thing. Some of its decisions this week are shocking

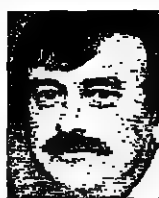
## Wrong turning to tomorrow's roads

If proof were needed that all governments are cynical, it arrived with the outcome of the review of the road building programme. A brilliant front page cartoon in *The Times* showed Swampy digging his way into a Job Centre, but I suspect there will be more tunnels to excavate and more trees to climb before this little matter is resolved.

Labour has talked grandly of developing an integrated transport policy, but this week's announcement proves it has done no such thing. Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, is more evident in this exercise than any other minister. The conclusion that road programmes have been judged on the basis of cost is irresistible.

Some effects of Labour's decisions are shocking. There are heaven knows how many perfectly

### DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



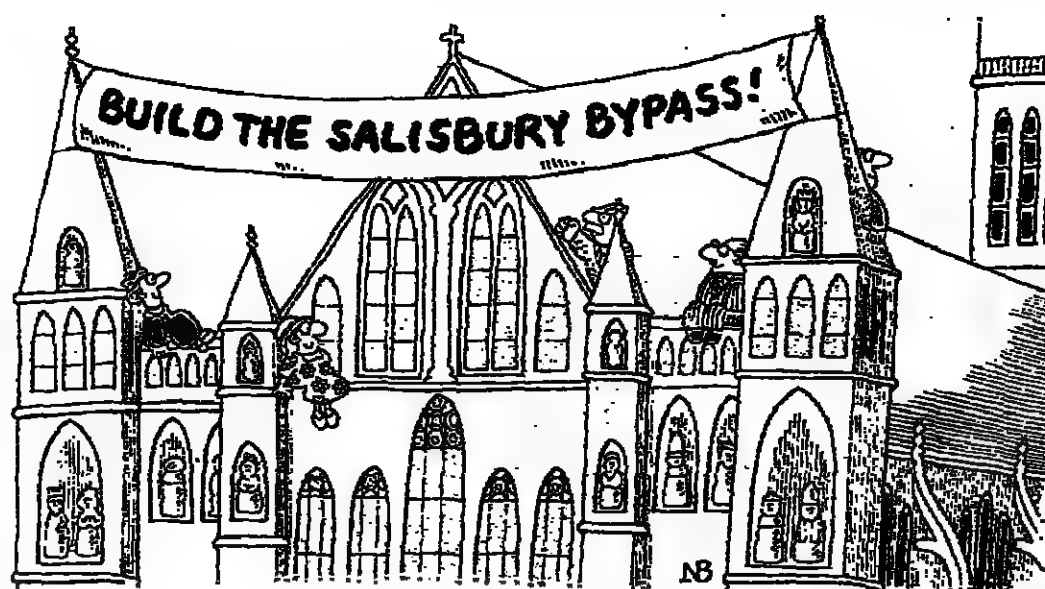
Peter Barnard

good homes along the A40 in west London which have been blighted for years by the prospect of a road widening programme now cancelled. The Government refuses to say how much has been spent on compulsory purchase of them. Somewhere on the airwaves

after the announcement I heard it said that the A40 scheme had been scrapped because it would have "encouraged commuting". Anyone who has travelled the route knows what nonsense this is. The A40 needs widening to cope with existing traffic, not some future estimate of demand.

The A40 example illustrates perfectly the muddle the Government is in. Everyone now agrees that predicting future demand then providing the roads to meet it is no longer any good. The car market grows to anticipate an increase in the amount of road space; new roads are out of date by the time they open.

But the A40 and another cancelled scheme, the Salisbury bypass, are not in that category. They were designed to deal with problems that exist now. John Prescott,



the Deputy Prime Minister with overall responsibility for transport, knows this. Prescott may have a lot of titles, but Brown's Treasury has lots of clout.

Thus the Birmingham northern relief road now gets the enthusiastic endorsement of the very Labour politicians who swore before the election that they would not build

it. Why this change? The fact that the privately-financed toll road will cost the Government nothing to build but would have cost £30 million to cancel may have something to do with it.

Are you planning to visit Salisbury soon? Take plenty of iron rations. Thanks in part to a crazy decision to build out-of-town shop-

ping centres too near the town centre, traversing Salisbury by car is now a bump-and-grind crawl.

The Salisbury scheme's cancellation is a triumph for an emotional con trick perpetrated by the environmental lobby, using Constable's painting, "Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows", as part of their campaign. The mead-

ows in the painting would not have been affected by the road scheme, but who cares about facts?

And who cares about people? The citizens of Salisbury choke on diesel fumes daily, which is why they wanted the road, but apparently the carnation sedge and the marsh marigold — types of grass, since you ask — are more important than human health. Unless of course you think that the Government was even more interested in saving £76 million.

The most damning commentary on this half-baked political sleight of hand came in a television interview soon after the cuts were announced. No doubt *Newsnight* hoped for a ding-dong between Steve Norris, former roads minister and now head of the Road Haulage Association, and a representative of Friends of the Earth.

Not a bit of it. Both were happy to agree that building more roads is not the answer to our transport problems. Both accepted that it would be wonderful if roads moved from road to rail. But both also asked the same question: If roads are not the answer, what is?

There is to be a White Paper on transport next spring. Perhaps that will contain the answer. But I am not very hopeful.

## Driving is sexy, but making cars is a turn-off

Leading-edge technology in space age factories can't attract recruits, says Vaughan Freeman

Car companies will be the poor relations in the job recruitment league as thousands search industry for their careers this summer. While queues go around the block to become lawyers, doctors and City brokers, school-leavers and university graduates glaze over when the chance of a career in the automotive industry is offered.

Yet British designers are rated among the best in the world and have created a niche which should encourage youngsters to move into design and engineering.

Such are the skills of UK designers that John Barnard was chief designer for Ferrari's Formula One team, while Ken Greenley was headhunted by Ssangyong of South Korea to design its new Musso 4x4 vehicle. The industry is the single biggest manufacturing and retailing employer in Britain, employing 1 million people and using leading edge technology in space-age factories.

Yet Walter Hasselkus, Rover's chairman, says: "When it comes to manufacturing engineering, the British are not convinced, or as dedicated to it as young people are in Germany, especially in the universities. In Britain, parents planning a career for their children think first of the professions — becoming a lawyer or a doctor or whatever — and becoming an engineer is an option that is way, way down. In Germany it would be inconceivable for a lawyer to be considered above a member of the BMW board."

Daewoo's technical centre in Worthing, West Sussex, is the firm's biggest outside Korea, with a workforce approaching 1,100 and the South Korean company spending £15 million a year at the site on new equipment and facilities to go alongside computer systems and car test rigs already there that are among the world's most advanced.

Finding recruits of the right calibre is proving a major headache for Jim Mason, Daewoo's engineering managing director. He says: "The aero industry is seen as sexy, but the motor industry just is not. We have got to change that. Engineers themselves have to earn the kind of respect that, for instance, doctors have in our society and we have to encourage engineers to become far more inter-

ested in their continuous professional development.

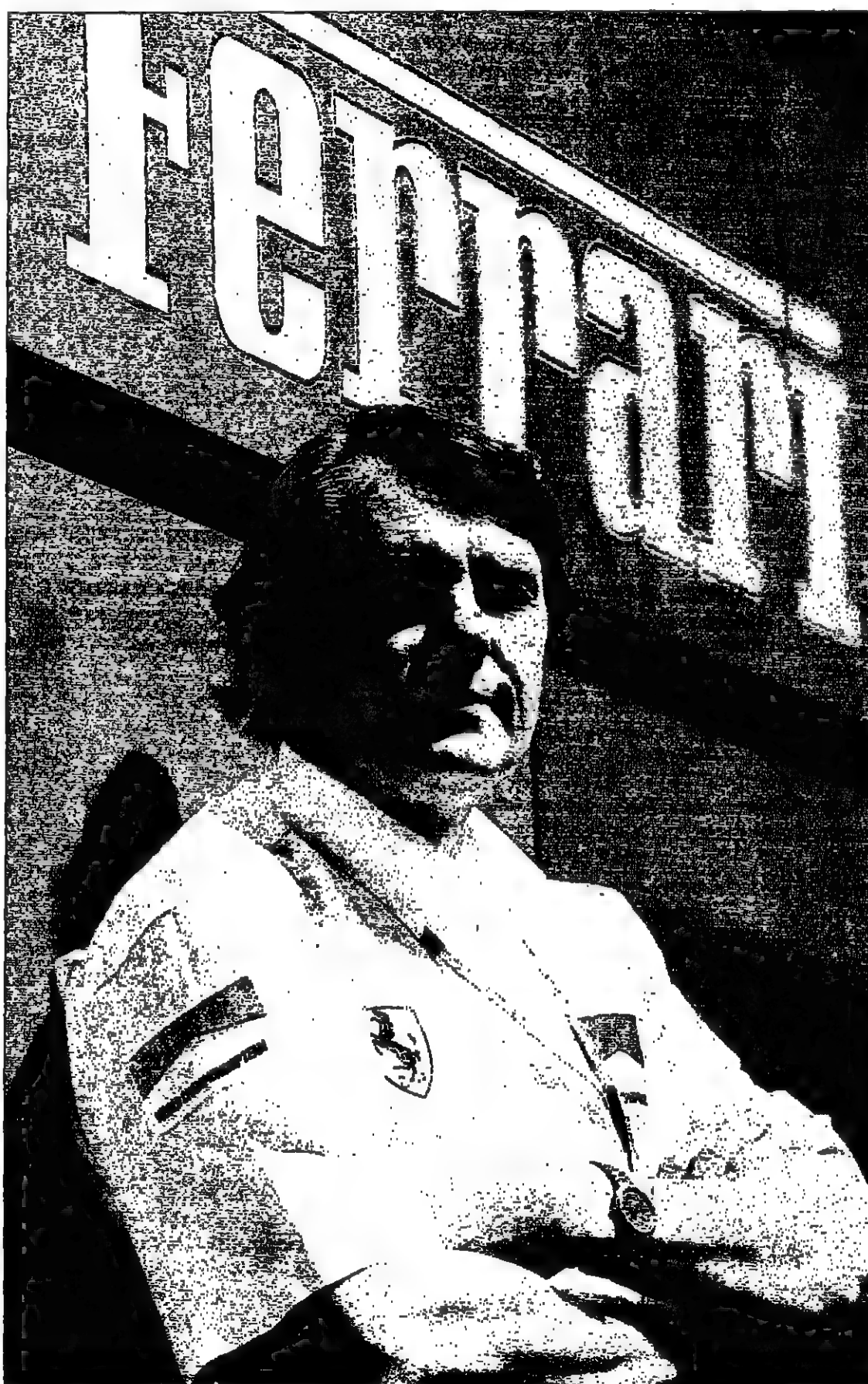
"The car is extremely complex to build and is a very clever machine. Yet all too often, because it is seen as a throw-away item, when you talk to kids at school they don't see it as a high-tech business. But when you bring people here to our technical centre, they are amazed at the work and diversity of work that we do. They have no idea just what goes into designing and creating a car."

To help bridge the gap, Daewoo is working on plans to sponsor college students as well as whole university departments in an effort to extend its research and development capabilities in Britain.

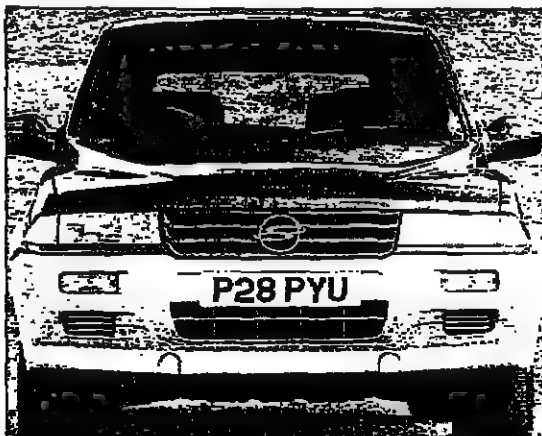
Mason adds: "We want to do projects, for example, on how people bend their bodies, knees and elbows, getting in and out of cars, as well as into the properties of different construction materials and how they can be manufactured for volume car production."

That sounds mundane work but is the sort of technical conundrum engineers and designers have to beat to produce the best cars even before they work on engines, body shape and the gizmos which make our daily lives easier. If those clever engineers are not there, Britain will lose out in the technological race.

But, at least Mason is doing his bit: both his sons have followed his example and now work as engineers.



British skills in worldwide demand: John Barnard, chief designer for Ferrari's Formula One team



Ssangyong of South Korea head-hunted Ken Greenley to design its Musso 4x4



### NEWS IN BRIEF

■ **WOMEN** can't park — according to Volo, the fleet management company based in Marlow, Buckinghamshire. It checked 30,000 accident claims and discovered the cost of the dings and dents suffered by women company car drivers was less than for men, at £59 compared with £61.

But that is because women like hitting "fixed objects", which is cheaper. Hitting things which don't move around much, like lamp-posts and parked cars, accounted for 17.1 per cent of claims involving women, but the figure for men was 13.6 per cent. Women were most likely to be to blame for their prang though, while men seem to like the challenge of whacking things when they are moving or simply losing control and leaving the road.

■ **ASTON** Martin has enlisted Cosworth Engineering to develop a range of engines for cars in the next century. Bob Dover, who left Jaguar to become Aston's new chairman, wants the Northampton-based company to use its Formula One knowledge to design a new power plant.

■ **THE** 9-5 model range from Saab will start at £21,995 on sale here in October. The car comes with a choice of a 2-litre 150bhp engine, turbo-charged 170bhp 2.3-litre or the British-built 200bhp 3-litre V6 Ecopower. Standard equipment will include twin side airbags, CD player and chilled glove box.

■ **DIESEL** could be 60 per cent more economical, according to *Diesel Car & Jet* magazine which ran a 1.6 petrol-powered Passat for 760.6 miles on a full tank — a return of 49.97 miles to the gallon. A 1.9-litre diesel version achieved 1,205.5 miles, equivalent to 79.45mpg.

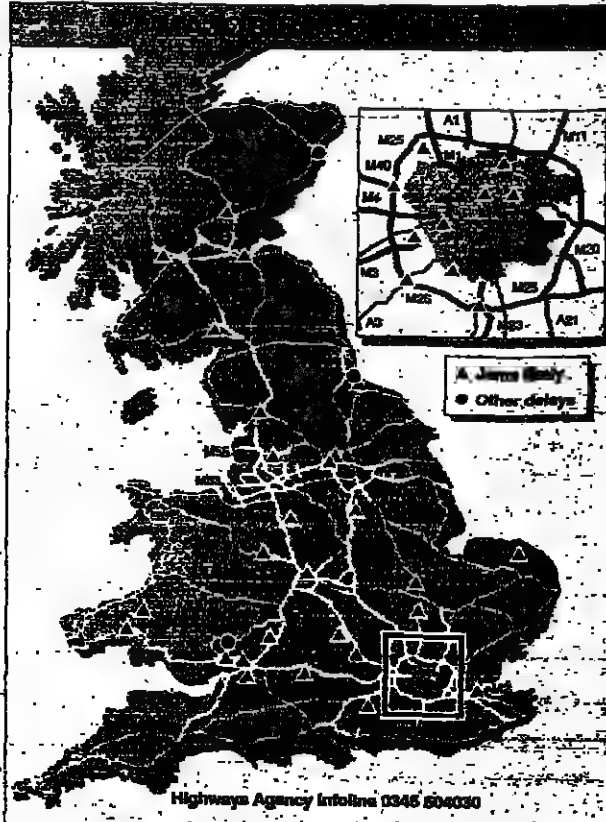
■ **WE SAID** this would happen, but Ford wouldn't listen. Remember when Ford launched the Ka, nobody knew how to pronounce it — even the bosses couldn't agree. Apparently, some dealers have given up in the confusion over being asked about the Ka and the car, so they are telling owners to ask about their Ka — pronounced Kay Ay. Ford should stick to Anglia and Escort.

### AN UNUSUAL SIGHT

● **LONDON**  
A306 Harmer Smith Bridge. Closed both ways to general traffic.  
A406 Angel Edmonton. Major works at the A1010 Fore Street.  
A3212 Grovener Road. Contraflow between Claverton Street and Lupus Street.  
A2043 Chisem. Single alternate-lane traffic on Malden Road between Fromondes Road and Chatsworth Road.  
A24 Morden. Epsom Road down to one lane southbound.  
A1209 Baitnal Green Road. Long-term roadworks between Vallance Road and Cambridge Heath Road.  
A312 Faggs Road, Feltham. Contraflow reduced to one lane each way due to long term bridge maintenance at Faggs Bridge, north of Staines Road, between 6am and 5pm.  
● **SOUTH-EAST**  
A1 Bedfordshire. Roadworks at Sandy roundabout.  
A4 Padworth, Berkshire. Temporary lights at junction with A240.  
M40 Buckinghamshire. Long-term roadworks with a contraflow between junctions 1a (M25) and 3 (Wycombe East).  
A8 Hampshire. Longmoor Junction, Greathead. Carriageway reduced to one lane northbound between Ham Barn Roundabout and Longmoor, southbound between Griggs Green and Longmoor.  
A41 Watford. Eastbound lane closure on North Western Avenue from Hutton Bridge roundabout to Launceston Green interchange.  
A414 Hertfordshire. Roadworks on St Albans Road, Hemel Hempstead.  
M2 Rochester, Kent. Roadworks with various lane closures.  
M40 Oxfordshire. Resurfacing work between Watlington and Oxford. Drivers heading to junction 8 of the M40 from Oxford are advised to use the A40 and A418.  
M25 Surrey. Restrictions and lane closures both ways between Reigate and A3.  
● **SOUTH-WEST**  
A58 Old Badminton Bridge, Badminton. Major roadworks with lane closures on Badminton roundabout.  
M5 Bristol. Contraflow across Avonmouth bridge with 50mph limit.  
A417 Malmesbury Bridge, Gloucestershire. Temporary lights during bridge work.  
● **MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA**  
A1 between Alconbury Hill and Alwalton, Cambridgeshire. Construction work with lane closures, contraflow and 50mph limit.  
A14 Thorpe Market, Nor-

folk. Lights at four-way junction with B1435.  
A52 Beeston, Nottinghamshire. Major roadworks on Derby Road. Expect delays between Sherwin Arms and Priory roundabouts.  
M54 Shropshire. Contraflow with westbound traffic on the shoulder. Eastbound on to lanes 1 and 2 of westbound carriageway.  
A50 Stoke on Trent. Major roadworks in the Meir area at junction with A520.  
M6 Junction 6 Birmingham. Long-term roadworks. Northbound entry slip to M6 closed at Salford Circus. Diversion in place.  
● **NORTH**  
M6 Cumberland. One lane closed both ways between junctions 36 and 37.  
A19 Merton, Durham. Contraflow with northbound and exit slip roads at B1255 junction closed.  
M25 between Blackburn and Accrington. Contraflow with westbound entry slip road at junction 7 down to a single lane.  
A19 between Thornaby-on-Tees and Billingham, Cleveland. Major roadworks with two lanes each way and 50mph limit.  
M1 South Yorkshire. Long-term roadworks with 30mph limit at junction 47. Delays expected on M1, M62 and A633.  
M1 West Yorkshire. Junctions 43 to 42 Stourton to Lofthouse Junction. Contraflow and 50mph speed limit.

● **WALES**  
A484 Carmarthenshire. Major roadworks on Francis Hill, Tynydd.  
A449 Monmouthshire. Long delays between Usk junction and the M4 junction 24 at Newport with major roadworks in place.  
A472 Torfaen. Contraflow at Pontypool.  
A485 Carmarthenshire. Temporary lights at Duff's Vale, Llanvbydd.  
A483 Swansea. Major roadworks between Elba Crescent and the Vale of Neath road.  
A472 Pontypool. Contraflow between Pontypool and Heron roundabout.  
● **SCOTLAND**  
Aberdeen Anderson Drive. One lane each way between Setfield Road roundabout and Queens Road.  
A74 Dumfries and Galloway. Lane closures between Greenhill and Gretna.  
M9 Edinburgh. Long-term roadworks and restrictions on Newbridge roundabout.  
M90 Frianon Bridge, Perth and Kinross. Contraflow.  
A737 North Ayrshire. Temporary lights causing long delays both ways between Roadhead roundabout and Beth.

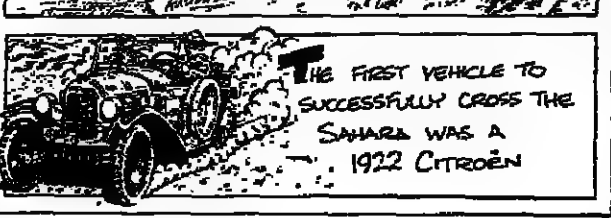


### AUTOFAX by David Long and Les Evans

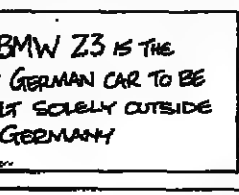
**RACING** IN TEMPERATURES OF UP TO 100°F, KEKE ROBERG won the 1984 DALLAS GRAND PRIX wearing A WATER-COOLED SKULLCAP.



**MINI** CREATOR SIR ALEC JESSESON'S FAILED MATING THREE TIMES.



**THE** BMW Z3 IS THE FIRST GERMAN CAR TO BE BUILT SOLELY OUTSIDE GERMANY.



**THE** FIRST VEHICLE TO SUCCESSFULLY CROSS THE SAHARA WAS A 1922 CITROEN.

هكذا من الأصل



# INTRODUCING TO BRITAIN'S LATEST PERSONAL TRANSPORT PASSION

## Two wheels come full circle



Everybody's doing it: taking to two wheels for the summer in the biggest craze for motorcycling since the Sixties. Mods and Rockers took to two wheels not just for the sake of fashion, but because they could barely scrape the money together for a vehicle with four wheels, but motorists are now deserting their hatchbacks and saloons for scooters and motorcycles that can beat the traffic and also offer the most fun you can have.

Now CAR 97 is joining the summer fun in a month of motorcycling in The Times with stories and the some of the best giveaways in the industry. Look in

Motorcycles and scooters are back. Kevin Eason looks ahead at the glittering prizes you can win

next week for details of a competition to win the latest Piaggio scooter — and then there is a chance to win the most exciting BMW motorcycle for years.

The bike is so secret that we cannot give details until our competition is launched soon, but this German speedster is the most desirable set of wheels in Britain — and it really is the only one in this country at the moment.

Our biking special reflects the resurgence of interest in motorcycling, which

seemed to have all but died out at one time but for the enthusiasts. As the cost of owning a car dropped dramatically, the motorcycle went out of fashion and the famous names disappeared from our streets one by one: Norton, Triumph, Vespa, Lambretta, BSA and many more.

However, the realisation that motorcycles offer one of the quickest, cheapest and most environmentally-friendly ways of getting around clogged city streets is dawning on a new generation

of bikers. Sales of two-wheelers have jumped 35 per cent this year on top of last year's rapid growth. In June — traditionally a quiet month for the motor industry — sales were still up almost 40 per cent while demand for scooters soared by 61 per cent.

Stands at the industry's annual exhibition, the Motor Cycle Show at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham in November are already sold out with 50 firms on the waiting list as huge crowds are anticipated.

And there will be thousands at the World Superbike Championships this weekend at Brands Hatch as motorsport enthusiasts discover that the boys on the

big bikes offer some of the most exciting racing anywhere in the world.

The vast array of new models means there is a two-wheeler to suit every size, shape and sex: models start with fully automatic 50cc scooters and rise to snorting monsters with power packs as big as a car engine. And the key figure in the trade — chairman of the Motor Cycle Industry Association — is Monica Dickman, a confirmed biker who is campaigning for more women to enjoy the freedom of two wheels.

So speed August in the company of CAR 97 finding out why Britain has gone bike-crazy — and take the chance to win some fabulous prizes.

## Flying Scott in the tracks of his father

It's 25 years since Paul Smart roared into motorcycling legend. Tomorrow his son will be the star — but Dad will be there as well, says Ian Morton



Scott Smart in action: with Paul for a father and Barry Sheene for an uncle, motorcycling came naturally to him. Tomorrow his machine will have a sign on the back — "My Dad's Faster Than Your Dad"

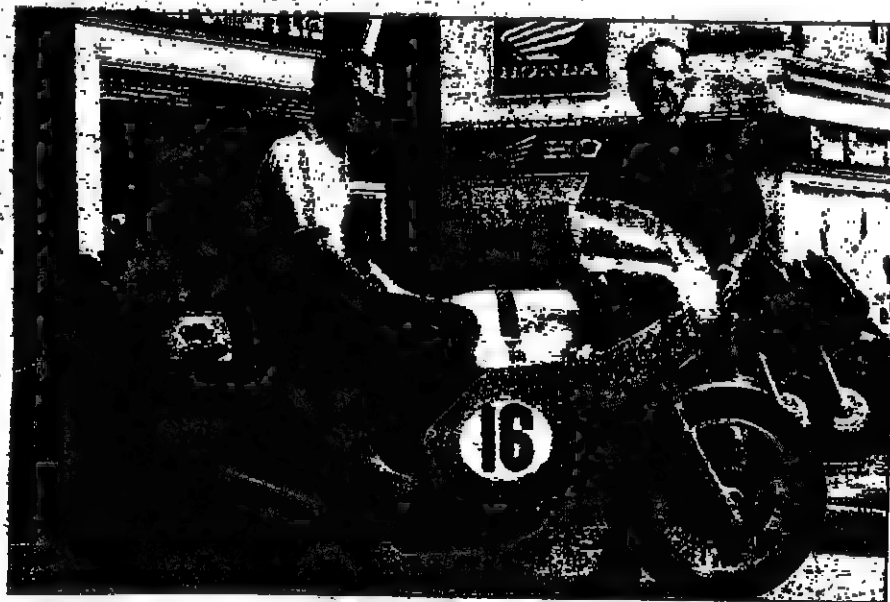
Anyone who even pretends to know bike history would put a finger on it straight away. The day a struggling English rider on an unproven machine built by a small Italian manufacturer took on the world "heavier" and helped to create a modern legend, it was the stuff of dreams and 25 years later it still makes a good yarn.

And an even better yarn when man and bike are about to make a celebrity appearance at a top meeting where the rider's son — astride a modern descendant of the machine his father rode — is one of the stars in a supporting race at tomorrow's World Superbike Championship.

First back to 1972 when a 30-year-old professional rider called Paul Smart was based in California and competing in US races for Kawasaki. One spring day while he was away competing, his wife Maggie took a call from Ducati, then a respected innovator but a minor player on the competition scene in Europe. Ducati needed a second rider to pair with regular works ace, Bruno Spaggiari.

Maggie asked what the job was worth, liked what she heard and found that the dates did not clash with a Kawasaki commitment. Unable to confer with Paul, she committed him to appear for the Italian firm at the inaugural Imola 200 race for 750cc bikes.

"She rang me and said — get on a plane for Italy because you're testing and racing at Imola next weekend," says Paul. "I'm not, I said. You are, she said. Get down there. Then she told me about how much and things were so tight



Like father, like son: Scott, left, poses with Paul and shows a poster commemorating the Imola 200 race in which his father made the unknown Ducati a contender

money-wise that even the start money made sense. I knew I was a long way down the pecking order. It turned out they had asked other people — including Maggie's brother, Barry Sheene. But I went. Maggie stayed behind — we couldn't afford her fare as well."

Paul knew why big names had declined the ride. This was to be the first big-time outing for Ducati and its new 750 V-twin, which could rev to 9,200rpm. "From the very first moment, I realised the bike was stunningly good — too good for the Dunlop road tyres they had fitted because it was a 200-mile race. We changed to racing tyres and the bike felt little better and I was still

unhappy. But when I got back to the pits, the team was jumping up and down because I had broken the lap record without realising it. "For a while, Bruno and I followed Agostini on the MV-Agusta but that was a punishing machine and he got slower and slower and we waited and then overtook. I led. Towards the end, Bruno went for an all-Italian victory but ran wide and went grass-curing. We still got the one-two."

The race speed over 200 miles had been an astonishing 97.7mph with laps of over just 100mph recorded by Smart, Spaggiari, and Agostini. Ducati was suddenly a magic name. Rescued from the

track as the 200,000-strong crowd went wild for mementos, the two riders faced six hours of non-stop adulation, paraded around Bologna in a glass-sided truck.

"I was like being the Pope," says Paul. "They gave me millions of lire — I still don't know exactly what it came to in pounds. But Bruno and I agreed that if we got the one-two, we would divide the money equally no matter which order we finished in. And Ducati were so pleased that they gave me the winning bike."

Since Paul's Imola triumph, the bike has been on display in the showroom of his bike dealership in

Paddock Wood, Kent. Tomorrow it roars again at Brands Hatch as Paul, now 55, does a couple of demonstration laps — "slow ones because I'm afraid of hurting myself at my age" — before his 22-year-old son, Scott, competes for the Team Alstare Corona Extra on his Ducati 748 in a round of the World SuperSport championship.

With his father and uncle, Barry Sheene, it would have been strange if young Scott had been disinclined to ride bikes. He was second in the British 250 championships and Motorcycle News Young Rider of the Year in 1996. He has won four rounds to lead the 250 championship by 26 points this year and

hopes his outing for Ducati tomorrow will help his quest for a sponsor and a regular team place in one of next year's world championships.

For tomorrow's event, Scott's bike appears in the original Imola green and silver paint and he wears period-style black leathers in recognition of that magic day 25 years ago when his father and Ducati made their spectacular entry into the top echelons of the sport.

There is however an extra item of livery on Scott's machine — a small sticker on the rear, addressed to whoever is following him closely round Brands. It reads: "My Dad's Faster Than Your Dad."



Foulston: into £10m profit

## Brands leader

NICOLA Foulston is turning her place over to thousands of bike fans at the weekend — and she might even pull a few pints, though she runs Brands Hatch, venue for the Superbike championships, writes Helen Mound.

The 29-year-old chief executive of Brands Hatch Leisure is well acquainted with the sound and fury of motorcycles, though she has no desire to take to the track.

Her mission is to get more spectators through the gates and more people involved in motor-sport. It is tricky for most fans, no matter how enthusiastic, to "have a go" at the sport they enjoy unless they can afford the car, mechanics and paraphernalia of racing.

"Racing is expensive and inaccessible to the public, which is why it's a minority live sport," she says. "It's not like football where the fans can just buy a football and have a go. Organisers are afraid it won't be taken seriously if they make it fun but serious things are rarely popular."

When Nicola took over the business in 1989, it was losing £300,000. Yet her ideas caused uproar. Suggesting Brands Hatch was a business that should make money and not a museum enthusiasts had a right to visit for free won her few friends. But profits last year were more than £10 million, testimony to Nicola's efforts starting activity days and corporate hospitality.

As a child, weekends were for watching racing with her father, John Foulston. His interest in the sport and sudden death in a racing accident led to her being thrown in at the deep end at Brands Hatch. Foulston had built up a £40 million computer company when he bought Brands and three other racing circuits in 1986.

Now Nicola is a hands-on boss packed with ideas — and always willing to learn the hard way even if it means getting her hands dirty. Nicola not only encourages her 140 workers to work in other areas of the firm, she sometimes sells tickets on the gate or even works behind the bar — which is where bikers might spot her in between the action this weekend.

## Pablo remains a lone rider in the sun

Helen Mound meets the solar power scooterist seeking a sponsor

It might look like a pizza delivery bike, but this silent runner could be a commuter's dream machine. Sol is the world's first solar scooter.

But Pablo Chapell, a Kent-based engineering-design graduate, says the motor industry isn't ready for his innovative design: "People are quite ignorant about solar power. It will be a long time before it's commonly accepted."

Sol cost £5,000 over four months to build and has a range of 25 miles and top speed of 30mph. Its 12-volt (rechargeable) battery takes its charge from solar panels over the rear wheel. An hour of sun provides power for one mile. The panels are disguised as a stylish rear spoiler and the bodywork is finished in

vivid yellow. Pablo admits his scooter was expensive but insists the electric motor does away with many expensive parts required by a petrol engine, and mass production would cut costs to the same as ordinary scooters.

"There's no gearbox, carburetors or clutch and the price of panels and batteries is constantly coming down," he explains. And whatever extra you spend on the purchase price would be saved on running costs as it doesn't need oil or fuel and servicing is negligible. Pablo spent 18 months develop-

ing the concept after getting the idea working in Los Milinos, a solar-powered town in Spain.

His scooter at least proves that practical, economical and environmentally-friendly city transport is a possibility and could become an alternative to fossil fuel, polluting cars. So why hasn't some environmentally-conscious bikemaker snapped up the idea? Possibly because the silent-design doesn't have the street-cred of the noisy

pop-pop, two-stroke scooter and, since when was it cool to care about the environment? Or is Sol's limited range a problem?

"It can only manage 25 miles each trip, but few people travel more than that on a scooter in town. So if you travelled to work, say 15 miles, you'll have energy left for 10 miles. And if you left the scooter outside while you did an eight-hour day in the office, when you leave you'll have 18 miles in

the batteries. Overnight it can be charged by electric lights, but that's not as effective as sunlight."

An alternative to the hefty lead-acid battery for solar (and electric) cars has so far eluded scientists and until they crack the problem, Sol is likely to remain confined to short trips around Pablo's home village West Malling in Kent.

Shame though: just think how quiet cities would be with silent scooters on the road.



Pablo and Sol: "People are quite ignorant about solar power"







Demand for the Mercedes off-roader means you could pay a fortune over list price, but Helen Mound has doubts about it

## Join the queue, but is it really worth waiting?

They have been sleeping in the streets and jamming telephone switchboards because places on this waiting list are hotter than tickets for an Oasis farewell gig.

If there is a queue, it must be for a Mercedes because this is the company that builds cars you simply cannot buy. The M-class joins the long list of models which will take years to get hold of, unless you either had the foresight to get on to the waiting list early or can afford to pay thousands of pounds over list price for the car of your dreams.

For Mercedes-Benz is sold out. A company spokesman says: "You could probably get your hands on a C-class if you weren't too fussy about the engine and colour. But otherwise all the cars have waiting lists."

More than 4,500 potential UK buyers have registered their interest in the M-class... even though the off-roader is not on sale here until autumn and the first delivery will only be 200 cars. But it is the same across the range: if you want the new A-class, then you're in a club with 32,000 other people which means the waiting list could be two years long at launch next summer.

The SLK sports car is four years away unless you pay a premium for a private sale. The night before the CLK coupe went on sale to employees in Germany, many slept outside dealerships. By 10am the next morning, the 1997 order book was full, by mid-day 1998 was sold out and by 4pm no more employee orders could be taken for the car this century. For ordinary buyers the CLK is 18 months away - SL, at least a year; E-class V6 models, 18 months; S-class 3.2/4.2 know-nothing, six months.

Tom Hartley, the motor trade's entrepreneurial specialist in supplying the unobtainable, has sold 120 SLKs - 10 per cent of Mercedes-Benz UK's total sales this year - to customers willing to pay the extra £7,000 to jump the queue.

In its first week on sale, he supplied 15 CLK coupes at a £10,000 premium and expects A-class and M-class to uncover hundreds more customers desperate for their car with a three-pointed star.

"We're getting calls daily from people who want an A-class in the spring and don't want to be left on a waiting list," he says.

M-class joins this torrent of demand for a brand which was always acknowledged as excellent but terminally dull. Existing designs have changed all that and Mercedes's new factory in Alabama is no more likely to cope than

bought by Americans, who apparently think remote central locking an outrageous luxury. Mercedes has decided to be stingy with all of us. But such features become important if the M-class is to succeed in knocking the prestige 4x4 crown off the Range Rover. The 5.5-litre V8 AMG M-class with aggressive bodywork, rumoured for 1999, would be ideal in Europe, but supplies will be even smaller.

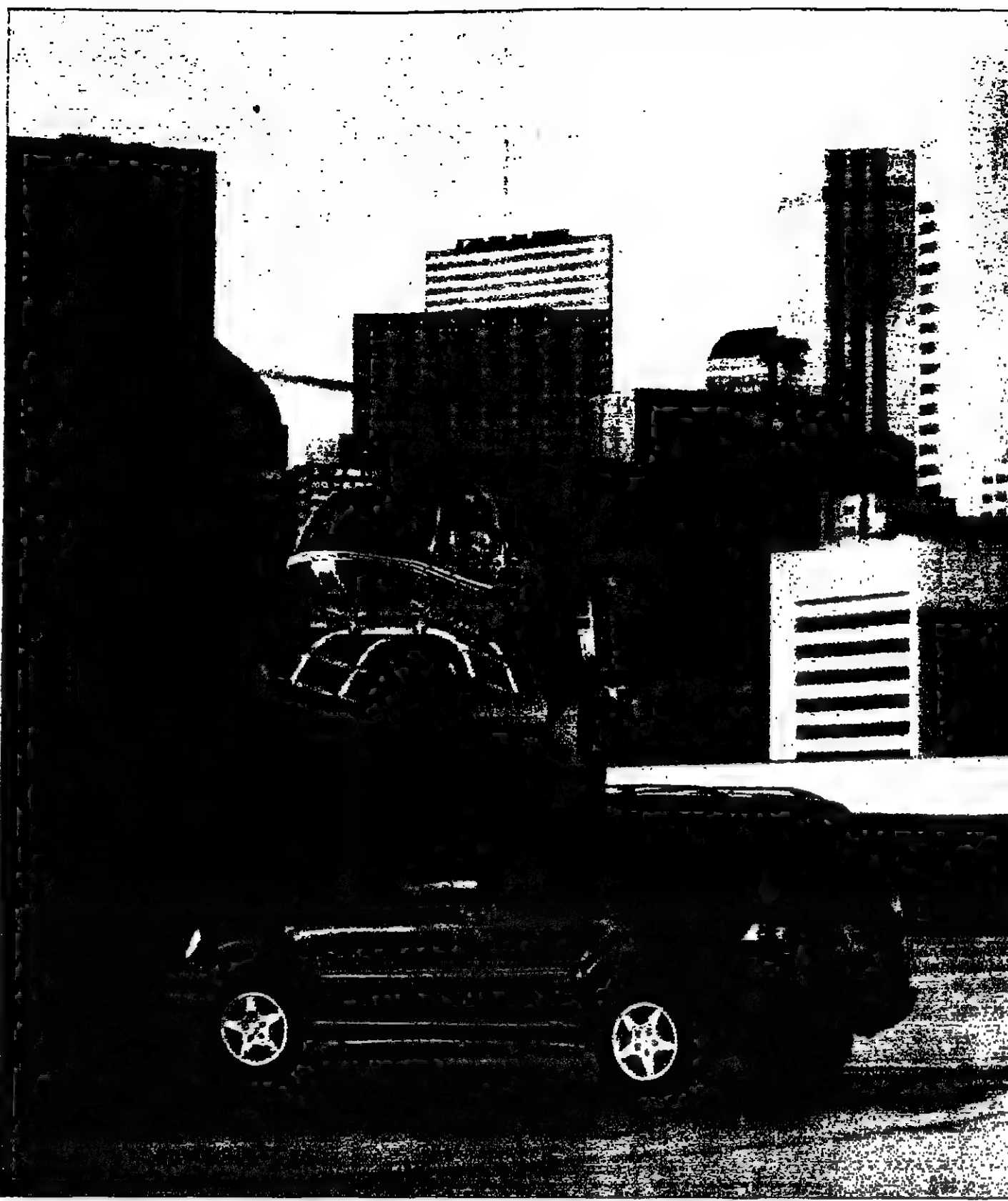
Styling is also lacklustre: nothing about the interior says you are driving a funky new Mercedes off-roader - but then little on the outside makes such a statement either. Only the shapely headlamps and tail lights save it from being an also-ran.

Like or loathe the styling, there is a saving grace however: this Mercedes is probably better than a Range Rover to drive. The company has found the most agreeable compromise between on and off-road driving. Gone is the vague steering and wallowy ride of other off-road cars, which are often set-up for a muddy field at the expense of the ride on Tarmac. Yet take it off-road and the M-class clatters with the agility of a mountain goat.

M-class walks up steep mud slides with grace, and with none of the creaks and rattles of a Range Rover, proving it's well bolted together, even though this car comes from the US and not Germany. A sophisticated traction control system complements its four-wheel drive.

The 3.2 V6 power pack offers impressive engine braking to slow downhill climbs. When its five-speed automatic is slipped into low-ratio first-gear, the M-class tiptoes down steep slopes as if it was anchored to the top.

On the road, steering responses are slow by Mercedes standards but a vast improvement on most other off-road cars, the most car-like of any 4x4. With four-wheel independent suspension, this is an off-roader you can chuck into corners



M-class in the city: comfortable, impressive, refined... but don't expect any of the luxury features on the marque's other top models

### MERCEDES M-CLASS

Engine: 3.2-litre V6 developing 215 brake horse power at 5,500rpm (4.3 V8 to come in 1998 and 2.7 diesel and 2.3 petrol to follow in 1999). Four-wheel-drive through five-speed automatic transmission with low ratio and traction control.

Performance: 0-60mph in nine seconds; top speed 112mph. Average fuel consumption, 23.7 miles to the gallon.

Prices: Expected to be between £28,000 and £38,000.

## Nissan's estate of the Euro art

Hugh Hunston looks at the newest entrant in a booming marketplace

Estate cars, shooting brakes or station wagons are carving a growing share of the market, particularly in what marketers define as the D-class sector, the territory of Ford Mondeo, Vauxhall Vectra and Volkswagen Passat.

In Britain the share of sales taken by the upper-medium estate car has climbed from 13 to 16 per cent in a year and is still growing. In fashion-conscious Italy, "wagons" take a thumping 52 per cent. Logical, sensible Germans register 30 per cent and overall the European figure is set to vault from 18 per cent in 1995 to 29 per cent by the end of next year.

The arrival of the multi-purpose vehicle is having an impact above and below D-class where the company driver often does not consider an MPV has the correct corporate image.

Against this background of spectacular growth, Nissan showed the estate car version of its Sunderland-built Primera, due for launch next May. Unlike its Japanese-built predecessor, described bluntly by the new car's stylist Stephane Schwarz as a "utilitarian workhorse with very little image", the successor allegedly blends form and function.

Schwarz, who headed a Munich-based team devoted to "designing and developing in Europe by Europeans a car for European customers", says estate cars have become objects of fashion, making "powerful statements" about who buys them, their lifestyle and leisure pursuits.

The rear comes with conventional, horizontal clusters integrated into the tailgate and the Primera is claimed to be a compromise between the sportier, less spacious estates and the more functional Ford

Mondeo. Schwarz emphasises that estate car design hinges on the angle of the rear window. Too steep or upright, and it is stigmatised as a van; too raked and the marketing clinics consider load space is compromised.

Of four design proposals, the Munich team opted for a curved convex, bubble-effect rear hatch, with an overhang behind the rear wheels just over 3ins longer than the saloon version. Nissan concedes that it has 3 per cent less luggage room than its predecessor but says its nominal 1,650 litres of room behind the front seats is 32 per cent greater than Audi's A4.

The company's technology centre in Cranfield, Bedfordshire generated the interior design and while they did not reinvent the wheel, they found a new use for the box. Lateral and longitudinal thinking has rendered the centre of the boot space reversible, turning upside down to provide a sturdy plastic box for muddy wellies and/or dogs, wet clothes, or shopping. Inverted, it also adds 4ins to the load height or depth, which allows for slotting in suitcases vertically.

Cubby holes abound and the rear seats incorporate three inertia reel belts which should not inflict bruised and bleeding knuckles when the 60/40 folding format is applied. A 12-volt power point is built in for a coolbox or power hose.

To be built exclusively at Nissan's Sunderland factory, the Primera Estate should cost no more than £1,000 above saloon or hatchback versions, whose engines and specifications it will share. The Primera Estate's share within the range is set to double from 10 to 20 per cent.



Stephane Schwarz and the new Primera: estate cars have become objects of fashion

## Lucy reverses back to the place where she started



BMW Compact: full of quality - but £2,000 for the extras

Kevin Eason  
on the search  
for a new GTi  
that went in a  
complete circle

WHAT DO you do when you grow out of a GTi? Lucy Pawson is a long-time admirer of Volkswagen's Golf GTi, but the 29-year-old graphic designer tired of its boxy styling and a look which has been around almost a quarter of a century.

"They have become quite common," she says, "and I need something with quality and performance but which has style."

The brief Lucy set CAR 97 was to suggest a model which was compact, three-door, sporty, stylish and around £15,000.

Audi's new A3 fell at the first hurdle because Lucy decided the styling and interiors were dull. At £14,411, the 16-litre engine only offered 101 brake horse power and moving up to the sportier 125bhp 1.8 meant a £1,500 price jump.

BMW's Compact fared bet-



Golf GTi: longer, chunkier and with a new engine range

ter. Lucy settled behind the driving seat of the 1.6i and decided: "Cute, feels sturdy and full of quality. I want one."

But Lucy discovered that she might have to spend as much as £2,000 on top of the £14,540 price ordering extras she wanted. So, goodbye Compact - though with an aching heart.

In with the Renault Megane, only considered as a cabriolet though. With 150bhp from the 16-valve engine, there was more than enough power to please - and just

one drawback: the price of £19,040.

One more thing threw CAR 97's suggestions scheme into chaos. VW unveiled the next generation Golf this week, on sale here in December. Longer and chunkier than its predecessor and with new engines, twin airbags across the range and options including side airbags, the new Golf made Lucy stop and think again.

"That looks good," she said. "I think I'll wait until December and get another Golf." Typical woman.











The V40 is the Nineties descendant of the ES 1800; Ian Morton finds one owner who wants to remain in the Seventies

# How successful is Volvo's successor?

## VOLVO TWIN TEST

It looks like an estate car and is said to be the spiritual successor to the ES 1800, that pretty Seventies model whose letters stood for "estate sport". But the V40 is not an estate, says Volvo: it is a five-door hatchback. Nowhere in the descriptive literature does the "e-word" appear. Can this new Dutch-built Volvo truly claim descent from the ES 1800?

Nothing can succeed or displace the great original, believes London portrait photographer Godfrey Argent, who is on his third ES 1800 — of 1972 vintage — and shows no signs of changing it. Ever.

"We bought it in Leamington for £1,495 ten years ago. It had 72,000 miles on the clock, was painted white, which was a terrible colour for the shape, and was full of rubbish and dog hairs. We had a £4,000 rebuild including the engine and we've spent £3,000 since. Now the car is British Racing Green, which shows off the lines and curves perfectly and matches the pale green leather. People stop as I park and say, 'What's that, then?' and congratulate me. Have you ever seen such a beautiful car?"

Volvo could hardly disagree since it used Godfrey's car as part of its presentation to dealers when launching the V40. So could he ever be tempted by the V40? He is the sort of brand-loyal motorist the carmakers both love and hate.

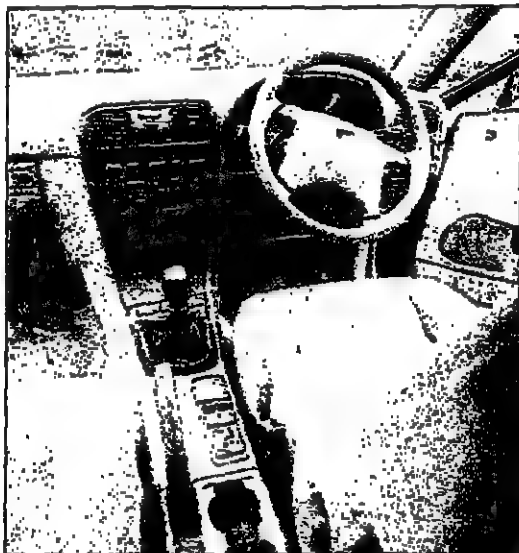
"I'd accept one as a gift," he says, straight-faced. "Then I could sell it and buy three more ES 1800s for restoration, if I could find them."

He went for a substantial town and country drive in the V40 while I followed in the ES 1800. The old car lacks little on performance but is by comparison loud with vague steering, brakes that do not exactly bite and a culture-shock control area.

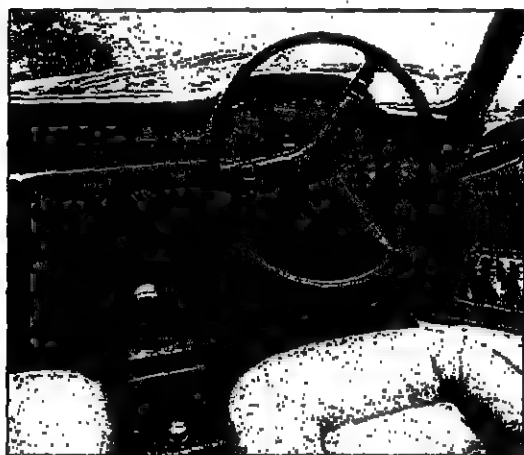
"I love that dashboard — it reminds me of a Cessna," says Godfrey, who holds a licence to fly single and twin-engined aircraft. "You sit low. It has the same hands-on feel, the same warm smells of instruments and wiring and casings. And I don't care what you say,



The V40, left, and the ES 1800: "plain and boring" versus "pleasing from every angle"



"All that grey covering" in the V40, left, while the ES 1800 dashboard "reminds me of a Cessna"



there isn't enough plastic wood to offend anyone, and it's certainly more acceptable than all that grey covering they've got on the V40 fascia, the colour of slip-ons worn by medallion men.

"Anyway, I've been in love with

the ES 1800 for a very long time, and you don't notice the ugly bits in someone you love. Yes, there are a few. The quarterlights are prone to leak, the mirrors are small and the heater, which is marvellous in the winter, refuses to stop heating in

summer and you can cook. And the car has early fuel-injection which has funny spasms on over-run and makes the rev counter go wobbly, but all the advice is not to tinker with it, and the popping stops the moment you touch the throttle."

## VOLVO ES 1800

Engine: Two-litre, four-cylinder developing 135 brake horse power through four-speed manual transmission with fifth gear solenoid overdrive.

Performance: 0-60mph in 12 secs, top speed 120mph.

Economy: 27 mpg touring, 20mpg urban.

Price: £2,638 when new.

## VOLVO V40

Engine: Two-litre, five-cylinder developing 140bhp through five-speed manual transmission offering four-speed automatic option.

Performance: 0-60mph in 9.2 secs, top speed 120mph.

Economy: 3.14mpg on average and 22.1mpg urban.

Price: £16,775.

Though designated an 1800, the car's engine is in fact 1986cc. Godfrey's car starts promptly on the coldest morning, uses no oil, makes 60mph from rest in about 12 seconds, has been known to hit 120mph on the clock and cruises

comfortably at 90mph where appropriate. "Of course it's illegal, but that's the ambient speed on the motorways I use, so the car settles down happily with its modern counterparts, and the steering, which is heavy in town and makes

you develop parking muscles, comes into its own. She is absolutely rock-solid in a straight line and totally unaffected by crosswinds. You can sit steadily consuming the miles for hour after hour — a bloody marvellous car for long journeys. I look at the frontal aerodynamics of the V40 and the wide-eyed gaping face of the ES 1800 and say, well, whatever that old design may imply in terms of speed and fuel consumption it certainly doesn't affect stability.

I add up to all the performance I need. Instead of a fifth gear, the ES 1800 has the old solenoid-operated overdrive available on top gear at the flick of a column stalk, equally effective for overtaking or for easing the speed down without using the gear lever. It's part of that package which makes the driver of an older car a better driver.

"I drive her well because I have to. An older car obliges you to drive more carefully and skilfully. You have to think differently. You observe, and plan. Because the brakes are not so sharp and powerful you can't drive up someone else's tailpipe. It is no coincidence that the road-rage merchant didn't exist when they launched this car."

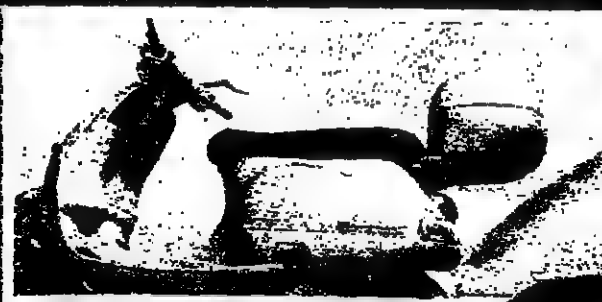
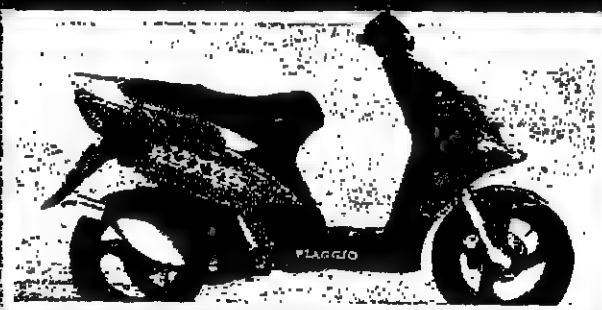
The real joy is the rear styling, says Godfrey. "Beautiful, distinctive, totally individual, low and sleek, pleasing from every angle — no car stylist ever got a back end into better shape. By comparison, the V40 is plain and boring, like so many so-called modern cars."

But he admits the impracticality of the old design, both the shallowness of the boot and the wonderful view of its contents given to the potential thief. When we return to London and park in the street, his expensive photographic gear goes into the V40, not the ES 1800.

"But I don't think there's much about the new car that derives from the old," he insists. "They have retained the perfect driving position. I got into the V40 and was instantly at home. I felt I was in a Volvo. But take the badges off and you can't see the lineage. They can claim what they bloody well like, but I've got eyes."

► REWARDING TIMES ◀

# SCOOT!



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THE TIMES

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# What made me into a fast woman

Claire Furnell on the joys of vintage car racing

On the grid, engine running, I wondered what on earth I was doing. After all, everybody needs a hobby — and mine is more bizarre than most, at least for a woman. Give me a vintage car and an open track and I'm happy as Larry... or Stirling Moss, I suppose.

I competed for a couple of years in hillclimb events and driving tests staged by the Vintage Sports Car Club — but now I am qualified for the real thing with a racing licence to hit the same track as Damon Hill and David Coulthard.

Almost, for this was slightly more junior than Formula One, though my first outing — at Silverstone, home of the British Grand Prix — was daunting to say the least. As I took my place on the grid in my Austin Seven Ulster, there were none of the expected nerves, just an excited realisation and an urge to win. The task was to complete 12 laps with one stop to change a spark plug.

The flag dropped and I was off — and what a fabulous fun, I discovered. I didn't have the fastest car in the field — nowhere near, in fact — but you don't need to be the best to enjoy the racing.

Tucking into corners and taking the racing line, five laps in at the pit stop, I bounded out of the car as my father undid the bonnet and handed me tools to change the plug. Removing a spark plug shouldn't be the most taxing of tasks but under the gaze of a photographer and a television camera crew my fingers turned to thumbs and suddenly this was one of the most difficult jobs I had attempted.

What seemed like hours was just minutes before I was back in the car and away to rejoin the action. With practice lap times of around 1 minute 53 seconds, I



Furnell on the track: an urge to win

raced on for seven more laps to achieve a finish and a faster lap time — even a podium finish if I could coax my growling little Austin around a track better known for being filled with the shrieks of modern F1 cars rather than the buzz of a car slightly past its best years.

At the sight of the number 12 on the lap board, I knew I was home, but where had I finished? Astonishingly, third in my class and 20th overall with a best lap of 1 min 51. That was it for me.

Racing, particularly in vintage cars, is an addiction difficult to kick, and once hooked you can never kick it.

I became aware of vintage racing when my father bought a 1926 Austin Seven Burghley. I doubt that its designers had ever considered it might one day be used for racing, but we decided to try it out at the Wiscombe Park hillclimb, Devon, three years ago. It received the first of many mentions for its unusual looks — and set the slowest time of the day.

We wondered just what we were getting into, watching one driver and his father



Furnell and her Austin Seven Ulster: "Many people think they can't afford to race a vintage car but this is one of the cheapest forms of racing there is"

rebuilding the back axle of their car by first draining the oil into the nearest receptacle — a frying pan, which was later cleaned and used for breakfast. But that is the gung-ho, friendly spirit of the Vintage Sports Car Club, which stages these meetings of ageing but still sprightly cars.

Many people might think they can't afford to race a vintage car but if you want to compete, this is one of the cheapest forms of racing there is. There is such camaraderie in the pits while an ever-increasing band of young members is shrugging off the image of the VSCC as

dominated by chaps with handlebar moustaches and Bentleys.

In fact, this is one form of motorsport where many women compete and this year I will also be taking part in a formula designed for drivers under 23. So, youth and women are combined to make racing a vintage car one of the most fun things I can do on four wheels. There are also many women racing, proving that this isn't just a sport for the guys.

How to go Vintage Racing:  
● Get a car. A good Austin can be picked up from around £5,000.

● Club membership: Joining fee £10; membership £34; young member (17-22) £17.

● Entry Fee: From £20 to £30. There are discounts for younger drivers.

● Running Costs: Around £1,500 a year, including insurance but no tax on cars over 25 years old.

● Transport: If you can't drive to the meeting, you'll need a trailer and tow car.

● Equipment: You need to be dressed for the occasion which means investing in good quality race wear. Start with a good crash helmet (which is mandatory), which costs from £50 for the most basic open-faced type to upwards of £500 for the full face protection. The golden

rule is to buy the best you can afford within reason. Fireproof Overalls (also mandatory) come from £65 for a simple single layer suit up to £500 for the better triple layer suits with extra fire protection. In-car fire extinguishers (also mandatory) are around £40. Gloves are recommended and cost from around £25 up to £100. Race boots (£25-£45) are also optional but are comfortable, light and easy to use. And don't forget you will need a race licence, which means taking a race driving course to qualify for the right to a place on the grid. Course and licence is about £150.

● The Vintage Sports Car Club, Tel: 01635 44411. Fax: 01635 590612

## Such elegant, swelegant parties

Kevin Eason looks at some stylish cars on show in Paris this summer

Walk into the car park outside the Parc de Bagatelle in Paris next month and you will get depressed: the art of the automobile seems long gone.

The Concours Automobile Classiques et Louis Vuitton celebrates its tenth anniversary by putting on show a selection of cars which exude history and personality.

The Renault XB of 1907 at least had a sense of style, even in the dim and distant past. Have there been cars prettier than the Talbot Lago SS or the 125 S, the first to bear the Ferrari name? They came off the drawing boards in 1937 and 1947 respectively — although buyers would bear each other to death even now to own such gorgeous creatures.

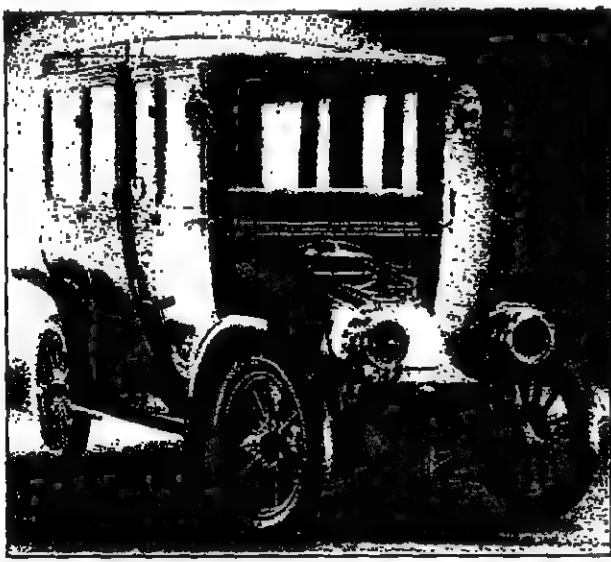
The Chevrolet Aerovette showed what might have been if carmakers had been willing to stick out their corporate necks, but Chrysler shows the way with its fabulous Phaeton, which might yet emerge as a production car.

Each car tells its own story of an age which boasted more elegance and spurned the demands of the accountants who have managed to turn the modern industrial world into a bleak wasteland of sameness.

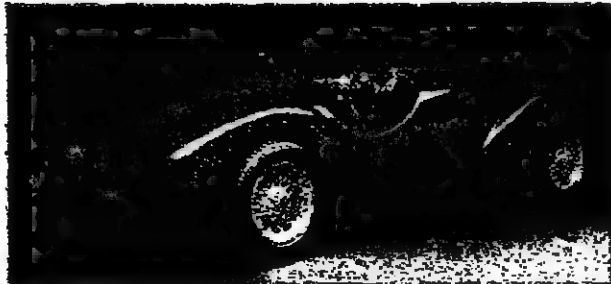
Ignore the Michael Crawford lookalike in the turret of the Rolls-Royce armoured car though, for the car is impressive, even laughably so. Try sticking an armoured body on to a Silver Spur now and see how well it would work.



Talbot Lago SS: designed in 1937, although buyers today might kill each other to own such a gorgeous creature



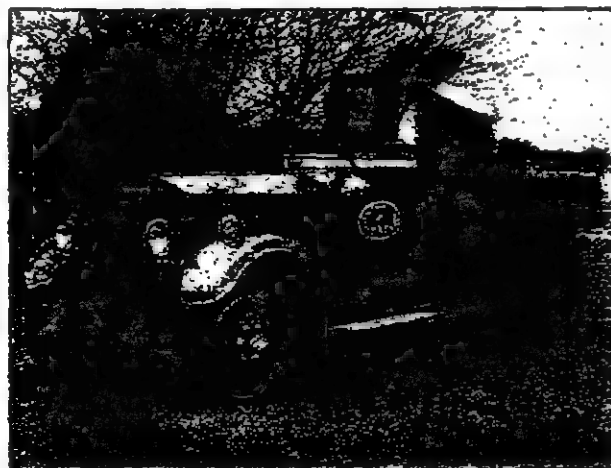
Renault XB of 1907: style of the dim and distant past



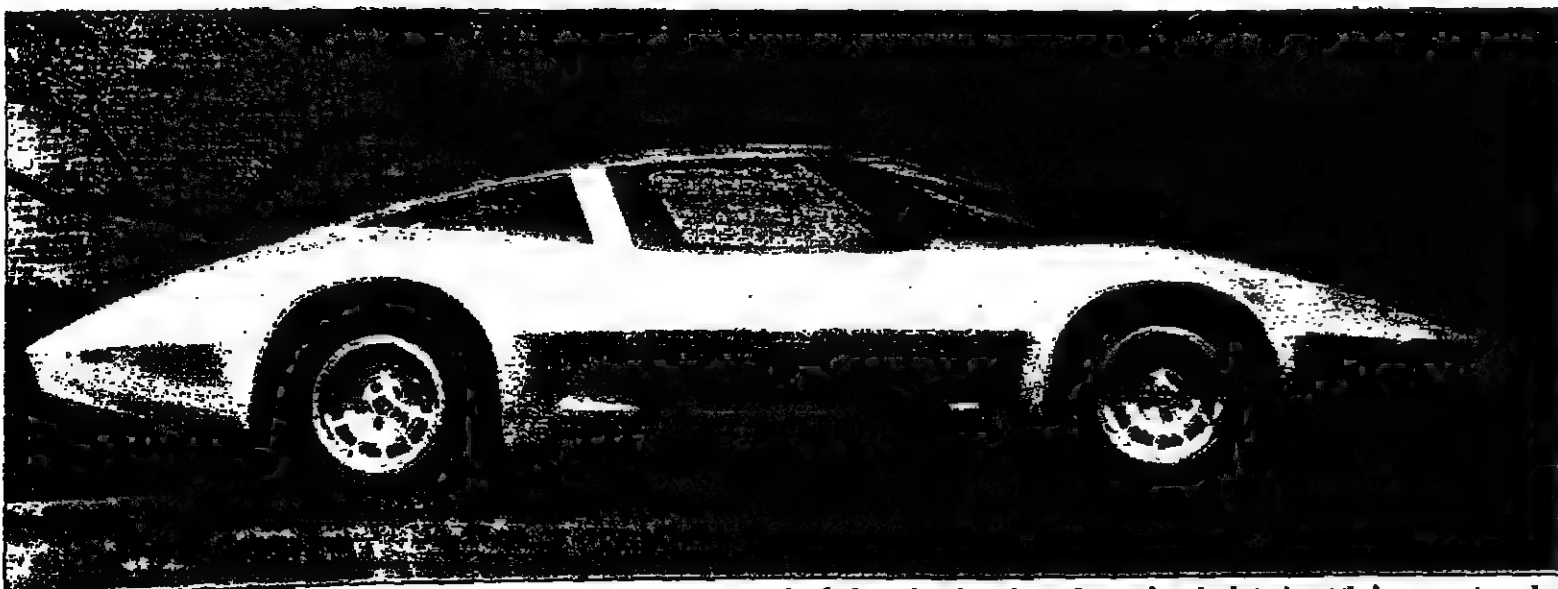
The 125 S of 1947, first car to bear the Ferrari name



The 1997 Phaeton, which might yet go into production

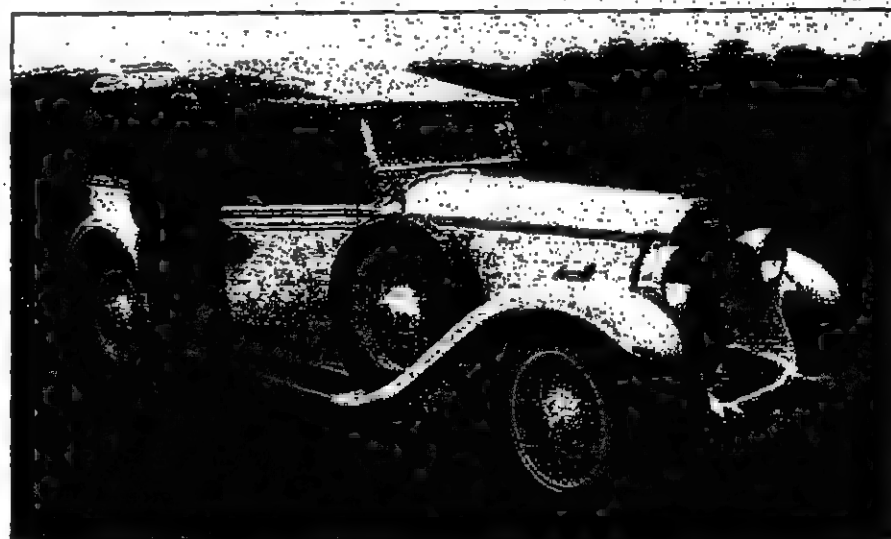


Rolls-Royce armoured car, veteran of the First World War



The 1977 Chevrolet Aerovette: Grand Touring American-style and an example of what might have been if carmakers had stuck out their corporate necks

## Tony Dawe reports on our Shakespeare entrants



Idwal Bacon and his Buick, restored after research at the National Motor Museum

AN EXTREMELY rare Buick seven-seater open tourer has gained one of the first places reserved for classic vehicles owned by CAR 97 readers on this year's Coventry run through Shakespeare country.

The 1928 Master Six Model 49, one of only two built, was entered by Idwal Bacon, an engineer from Patching, West Sussex, who has restored the impressive machine after buying it in a poor state five years ago.

Mr Bacon wrote in after reading that 20 places were being reserved for CAR 97 on the heavily over-subscribed rally, which will take 480 veteran, vintage and classic cars on a 65-mile trip from Coventry to Kenilworth, Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick on September 7.

The event is being sponsored this year by the Institute of Mechanical Engineers to mark its 150th anniversary and the organisers were looking for rare and innovative models to take part. Mr Bacon's Buick certainly fits the bill.

"It was built in Canada by McLaughlin, the famous carriage builders, on a Buick chassis, presumably for someone with a large fam-

## Bacon's rare slice of Buick

ily," he says. "It was shipped to South Africa where it was owned by the Standard Bank, but reached Britain in 1933. It was so large — and cars of its size so rare after the war — that a crane was fitted in the back and it was used as a recovery vehicle. I got to know the car as a young mechanic when it was owned by Cyril Piggott, who promised me first refusal if he ever considered selling it. I finally got the call in July 1992, but it was in a sorry state. The engine had seized but the car was basically sound and I restored it after carrying out research at the National Motor Museum and making some of the parts myself."

Martin Hone of International Festival Services, the organisers, says: "Mr Bacon's Buick deserves its place in The Times Twenty for we

are looking for unusual, wacky and interesting models to represent CAR 97 readers. The entry has been excellent with a good selection of classic saloons, sports cars and the bizarre."

The Buick will be joined by at least one other American car for another place has been awarded to Cliff Wright's 1948 Studebaker Champion Starlight Coupe.

Mr Wright, of Droghda, Wexford, wrote: "The car was imported from the Philippines via Hong Kong in December 1987 and remained unregistered in Winchester until I purchased it in April. After completing various jobs to make it roadworthy and obtaining an MoT certificate, I successfully registered it on July 2 and the car triumphantly took to the road for the first time in ten years."

A dedicated area at Coombe Country Park, Coventry, where the event starts and finishes, will be set aside for The Times Twenty. The owners of the chosen cars will also receive £50 towards petrol expenses from BP, provided they buy fuel from a BP filling station, and a free Michelin road atlas of Great Britain.

## WHEELS OF ADVENTURE



THE FOOTHILLS of Kilimanjaro, the Victoria Falls and the stunning bleakness of the Kalahari desert are all on the map for one of the most ambitious rallies in the classic car calendar. The London to Cape Town Reliability Trial is not only open to owners of classic cars — from vintage Bentleys to Volvo Amazons, but also drivers of off-roaders who spend their days wondering how they would perform when not cosseted on Tarmac.

Details for entries for the challenge in October, 1998 — £15,000 for the 4x4 adventure and £20,000 for the classics, including accommodation and vehicle shipment — from the Historic Endurance Rallying Organisation: 01886-833505. Lord Steel, the former Liberal leader, is in charge of diplomatic relations with countries being crossed, while Lord Montagu of Beaulieu is rally patron.





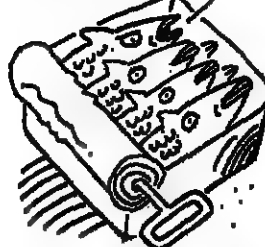




## CAR TOONS



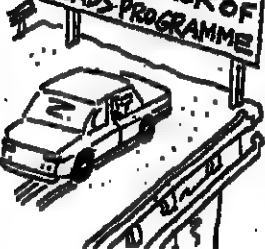
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ROADS PROGRAMME



Haldane

# Let Dr Fletcher look after your old friend

What used to be a Cottage Hospital has been converted into a nursing home that restores tired, classic cars back to health.

The morgue is no longer filled with bodies, but with spare parts, components and other automotive paraphernalia. The former intensive care unit is the body shop, where bent and rusting cars are coaxed back into shape, and vehicles are booked in for renovations and services where nursing staff checked in human admissions. Cars recovering in the Old Cottage Hospital in Newburn, north of Newcastle upon Tyne, even get sent "get well" cards from their anxious owners.

The automotive Florence Nightingale in charge of this slightly eccentric automotive care for the elderly scheme is Tim Fletcher, a retired engineer, whose 1927 Alvis is a regular out-patient and who recently threw a 70th birthday party for it.

The Old Cottage Hospital started life in 1909. Many of its patients came from among the workers of the nearby Spencer Steelworks that provided steel plates for ships including the *Mauritania*.

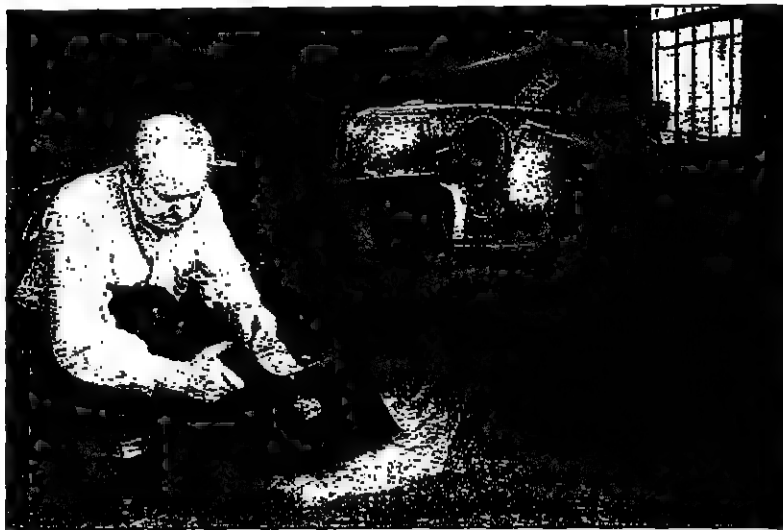
As a hospital, the building was at its busiest during the two World Wars but in the fifties it became home to an electronics and engineering firm. Three years ago, Fletcher took over as home for his firm, Classic Restorations.

He specialises in Morris Minors, Volkswagen Beetles and MGs but the present "patient" list also includes a 1936 Morris Eight, a 1930 Austin Seven Chummy, an MGB, a Triumph TRI Road-

Vaughan Freeman on a former Cottage Hospital where classic cars have become the 'patients'



Sign of the times: owners call from all over the world



Tim Fletcher and a Morris Minor, one of the hospital's specialties

ster, Reliant Scimitar, Alvis TD and an MGA.

Fletcher, who worked on the Sky Bolt missile system during his time with Avro then as service and parts director at car dealerships in the Midlands and the North-East, has always been a car "nut".

"My first, in 1957, was a 1927 Crossley, then two years later I bought a scrap Alvis, an SD1250, which I still have and which has just had its birthday party," he says.

While he can restore all sorts of classic cars, it is the

Morris Minor that helped get the hospital established. "We have had Morris Minors in the family ever since they came out. They are reliable and pretty trouble free and maintenance is easy on them."

So offering restoration work on Morris Minors, and selling them, seemed an obvious choice. "Having retired, I thought why not? And started looking around for a property and fell across this. Now we get customers from as far

north as Inverness and as far south as Devon. We even had a customer in Torbay who bought a car from us unseen."

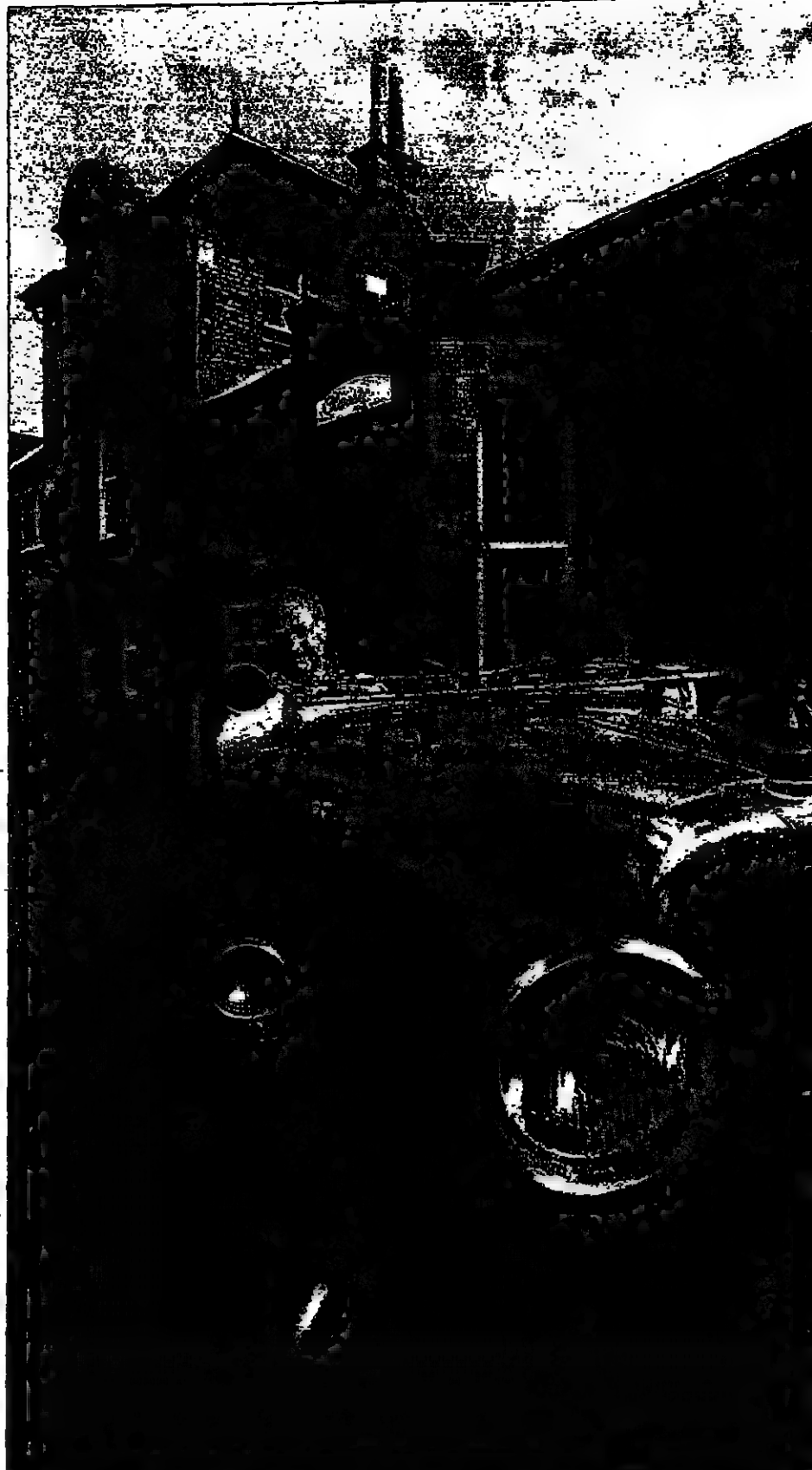
"He saw one of our advertisements for a Morris Minor Traveller and called us. We sent him photographs of the car and he sent us a refundable deposit and said he would pay for delivery. So we set out with the car on a trailer at 4am and by 11am we were outside his house. The car was a 21st birthday present for his daughter so we tied it up in pink ribbon and put some flowers on the back seat."

Fletcher says his customers are happy to leave their cherished cars with him for months at a time as rest, recuperation and restoration proceed. He gets fax messages from as far afield as Hong Kong and Singapore from owners asking how they are getting on.

It is not pure romance that maintains such a lively interest in classic cars, he says; the practical side is just as important. "People are interested in old cars not just as hobbies but also for everyday use. The fact that cars over 25 years old are exempt from tax is always attractive, although it is mainly their character, their style and the nostalgic attractions which make them irresistible."

"At the same time, car owners are also discovering that their vehicles are becoming classics sooner than they might expect. One customer who brought in his 1981 Turbo Renault 5 was pleasantly surprised to find that it had a market value of £12,000. He had bought it for £300."

Classic Restorations, Tel: 0191 2648118.



Fletcher and his 1927 Alvis SD1250, for which he recently threw a 70th birthday party

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Readers letters this month touch on who are the true sons of the soil, a far-from-bashful badger, and turning water into wine

## A controversial story of countryfolk

It is a great shame that an anonymous "Cornish Woman", who wrote to me in the most unflattering terms, will not be reading this. In fact, she has vowed never to "read or watch anything by [me] again". She tells me in no uncertain terms to "get those huge, flat feet into gear and walk to Hyde Park in support of the countryside" and that, "the article you wrote was all untrue. How much lower can you go?"

The point I was trying to make before that rally, and which clearly caused deep offence, was that the urban observer might receive the wrong message because all things rural have become aspirational. Country dwellers are the lucky ones, so townspeople think. How can a life with roses around the cottage door be anything other than idyllic?

My other concern was that true country people deal more easily in quiet understanding than shouting from rooftops. Kate Barlow, writing from Minehead, Somerset, seems to agree. She writes: "I have found living on Exmoor a salutary learning experience, totally different even from that of rural Gloucestershire, where I lived for many years. The relationship between the country people and the red deer is an integral part of life and seems to me positive and creative, not destructive. The indigenous people of Exmoor are not bloodthirsty, they are

vigorous and hard-working, realistic and compassionate. They are not Sunday Supplement people. It is terribly sad that the message of the rally will go to the already converted."

This is a conclusion clearly arrived at after a great deal of thought. Most rural matters are as complex as any, urban issue and take more than shouted words at a rally to appreciate and understand.

Paradoxically, I said, their natural reticence ensures that country people are not always the best at explaining them. But Mrs Mary Brill, of Ashburton, Devon, finds this view "patronising". She writes: "You fall into the trap of thinking that we are all the same: a dim tribe dressed in subfusc clothing permanently welded to its green wellies. On the contrary, some of us are sharpening up fast, though not before time, I agree."

Mrs Brill feels that I am being patronising towards her, so she has fallen into the same trap which has snared me: that of using too broad a brush.

The truth is that the countryside is now inhabited by such a wide variety of people that we do not have enough words to describe them all. Think of it as a

zoo which contains three distinct species, as well as one or two mongrels.

First, there is the rare and valuable creature who is the true countryman, or woman, who has lived a life on the land, in the woods and forests or by the rivers, who has developed a deep understanding of how to balance the natural forces that make the countryside work and would like to be left alone to get on with it. Among these are the more intelligent farmers, gamekeepers, huntsman and stalkers.

The second group of people have arrived from towns and decided to make their homes in the countryside. They know that they can never be true countrymen, but hope that some of it rubs off on them; they hold the first species in some reverence. And then there is the third class, those who happen

### DOWN TO EARTH



PAUL HEINEY

to have bought a house surrounded by fields, and that's it. They have no wish to understand the way of life in the first group, and find it all rather glib. These are the ones who complain about the dawn mowing of the cocked and the mud in the lanes.

Yet we have only one word to describe all three of them — countryfolk. Which is why Mrs Brill feels patronised, which was not intended.

While we dive to the treasure to discover words which might suit these three groups of people, suggestions welcome, we might also ponder a couple of other deeply rural mysteries. The first concerns a fearless badger.

Trevor Bunt, of Ware, Hertfordshire, writes: "Our walking dog, I stopped to investigate a rustling noise in a clump of nettles by the roadside. Imagine my

surprise when a half-grown badger cub emerged and walked straight towards me, ignoring my dog, which stood rooted to the spot. The badger cub rested its snout on my shoe, then ran its nose up to my knee. Eventually, satisfied that I was harmless, it made its leisurely way back into the undergrowth. Can you confirm that this is anything other than unusual behaviour in what I had always thought to be a shy, nocturnal animal wary of humans (and dogs)?"

That's a question which requires an answer from a true countryman, please.

The next mystery goes back to the 1920s and is recalled by Philip Henry (now 82), of Hove, Sussex. He was ten at the time and lived at the village of Salford Priors, near Stratford-upon-Avon. He remembers his father coming into the cottage carrying a "jam jar" which contained a blob of what looked like fermenting yeast, pulsating like a jelly fish.

"I and my three brothers gathered round to see this strange object, though we were all put off by its rather obscene appearance and the fact that it seemed

alive. My father was a man of little explanation but he did say it had been given to him and was called Mythuglum. A container and sugar was produced, a quart of water added and then the blob was introduced. The blob immediately sank to the bottom, suddenly rose to the surface, then sank again, and rose...

"Then, after a couple of days, two transformations had taken place: the liquid, now pale amber, was not just sweetened water but a very pleasant alcoholic drink. The second surprise was that the culture had doubled in size and now two blobs were willing to go to work."

"As you can imagine, word spread like wildfire round the village. Neighbours vied with each other for a sample of the blob and soon the whole area was saturated. The result was that the original blob was discarded to die among the coal ashes. Suddenly, the Mythuglum no longer existed and I never knew the true story behind it. The two local inns certainly didn't lament its demise."

It hardly needs saying that the turning of water into wine remains something of a miracle, and, if it can so easily be achieved merely by the use of a blob of Mythuglum, it seems that we must investigate further. In the interests of rural history, of course.

Any clues would be welcome. And, oh, all right, then. Samples, if you must.

Readers' letters are welcome on countryside matters of all kinds. Address them to: Paul Heiney, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. They are published on the first Saturday of the month.



No serious surfing dudes venture out without their shades

## Kings of the boardwalk

Crashing waves and big bucks lure the world's top surfers to Cornwall once a year. Anna Blundy hangs out with the best

The beach is seething with pierced and tattooed bodies. Loud music seems to be coming from most directions, joints are being rolled and hundreds of semi-naked people are using their sun-kissed bodies to help them to sell hair wraps, silver jewellery, sarongs and beer.

An Australian voice shouts out from the heavens: "There's a red flag flying out there today. Swim and you're dead. Go out and you won't last long! This is not Bondi Beach or California, however. It is Fistral Beach, Newquay."

The Australian lifeguard's message is for the faint-hearted only, because at the Headwax Surf Festival in Cornwall this week, the pros are out on the water no matter how terrifying the swell. From the tiny figures can be seen emerging from the roaring sea to ride the crests of their chosen waves into the shore, sometimes disappearing underwater, sometimes earning a yell from the crowd as they perform a radical move.

Newquay, with its year-round surf season, and waves as good as those in parts of Australia and California, has been the home of British surfing since Australian lifeguards introduced us to the sport, and Bill Bailey opened his board factory there in 1965. This year, there are 224 men and 30 women surfers taking part in the Association of Surfing Professionals' world tour qualifying round, hoping to grab themselves \$100,000 prize money. And they would need it. The competitors, from all over the world, but with a hefty Australian, American and South African contingent, have to do a lot of travelling to keep up with the world's waves and, apart from a certain amount of sponsorship, it is at their own expense.

They have come to Newquay

from Anglet in France and will leave after the finals for Huntington Beach, in the United States, taking their sun-bleached hair, toned bodies and salt-chapped lips with them. And they will probably be glad to go. Waves aside, Newquay, with its amusement arcades and burger bars, is not exactly Hawaii. "Without the surfing," said Australian pro Tracy Boscail, "well..."

Surfing may be a Sixties phenomenon, still shackled in the public imagination to free love, LSD and tie-dying in California, but in common with other sports, commercialisation has meant that the pros have to take themselves very seriously indeed.

Surfers divide into two categories. Those who can really surf, and surf bums. The former watch the clouds intently, check the weather reports, know all there is to know about waves and look disconcertingly fit, healthy and vibrant — they have early nights and drink water. Their teeth gleam, their tans glow and they have bodies that biology teachers would use to point out the muscle groups. They say things like "there's an off-shore today", but their conversation is largely comprehensible.

The latter group looks tired, smokes, has tattoos and pierced eyebrows, walks towards the sea rather than running and talks about how your first wave of the day can help to clear your hang-over. They use surfing slang to apply to life ("that's gnarly, dude") and speak no known language.

These people are a far cry from Laird Hamilton, an almost mythical creature whose prowess under monumental waves is documented on hundreds of adoring posters.

British No 1 Russell Winter is of the first group. Originally from Hounslow, west London, Winter's family moved to Cornwall when he was nine, and he has been surfing



Living the dream: surfers Paul Banks, Barrie Hall and Rod Reece take a break from riding the waves

ever since. Now 21 he is sponsored by Gonna Clothing, Gull Wet Suits, Dragon Sunglasses, Animal Watches and Lindon Surfers. "People are giving you an awful lot of money," he smiles. "We are professional athletes."

British surfers have not been winning titles since Martin Potter took the world title in 1989, but Winter and his colleague Grishka Roberts are planning to change that. Winter watches his fellow competitors out of the corner of his eye, laughing when they wipe out. The Voodoo Dolls (another trendy brand of clothing) women's competition is coming up any second. Are the girls any good, I ask. "I wouldn't know," says Winter, looking down shyly. "I've got a fiancée."

Down on the beach among the crowd who have turned up in their VW campers with "not working" surf stickers are the last thing on people's minds. The competition sponsors, Headwax Clothing and Cherry Coke, are making a huge effort to fit in with the traditional surf bum image. They have provided beach volleyball, skate boarding, tattoo painting and store after store of things such as toe rings, joss sticks, multicoloured hats and the flashier brands of surfwear.

Even the brochures are written



A tattoo for Richard Brooks

in mock handwriting and are headed by a pierced lip. "Cherry Coke is challenging surfing dudes and dudes to do something different at the 1997 Headwax Cherry Coke Surf Festival in Newquay from July 24 to August 4" it begins, and encourages visitors to have their navels pierced with a "Cherry Coke ring pull."

Then there is the competition to win a VW convertible Beetle — "I think... should get their... pierced because..." is the tiebreaker, and the best clean one

received mid-week was "I think the Queen should get her nose pierced because it would make stamps more interesting."

But back to surfing. This year Jake Paterson and Rob Machado (if he makes it over from France in time) are tipped to take the contest. Their three best waves will be marked out of ten. But a clean ten is rare and would only come from surfing a cube going down the middle of the inside of a breaking wave, something that rarely happens in England. These boys are among the select few, like the 22-year-old millionaire Kelly Slater, who actually made a good living from doing what they do best.

Ted Deurhorst, the sport's notorious eccentric, two decades older than the rest of them and still at it, is not one of these. His father is the Earl of Coventry and the mere mention of Ted brings a dazzling smile to the dry lips of the rippling pros. "He says there's no money in that background, but he must be getting money from somewhere to do the tour. And he's not getting it from surfing."

But money, of course, is not what they are doing it for. "When you feel an ice-cream headache coming on from cold waves breaking over your skull and every muscle is exhausted you'll understand why I have to get up and get out there every morning." Or then again, you might not...

## Secret shame of the blackbird

### FEATHER REPORT

BLACKBIRDS are starting to look rather scruffy. Their autumn moult is under way and many of these glossy black birds now have untidy, dirty-looking feathers sticking out of their wings. Their secret is that the inner margins of their wing feathers, which are normally concealed, are grey — and in August we can see their shame.

They lose only a few wing-feathers at a time and the new ones quickly replace them, so that they can still fly during the moult, but it makes them cautious and they skulk about under bushes more than ever.

When the British Ornithologists' Union was giving new names to some birds a few years ago, it considered renaming the blackbird the black thrush, which would be quite apposite, because it is the only pure black member of the thrush family. In the end, though, the union said it did not have the courage to change such an old, well-loved name. Internationally, however, the blackbird is now the "common blackbird", to distinguish it from species such as the yellow-headed blackbird.

Pure or partial albino blackbirds are sometimes seen and recently a contributor to *British Birds* magazine described two very peculiar young blackbirds, evidently with deficient pigment. They were cinnamon-coloured and looked like small collared doves.

I HEARD a blackbird singing in the last week of July, but this was a very late performer. I listened for a while to the sweet, low, throaty song, since it is unlikely that I shall hear another this year.

It is curious to think that, until 150 years ago, the blackbird was a shy bird of the forests, its low-pitched song is typical of birds of



The blackbird: scruffy feathers

deep woodland, because that kind of song carries farther among the foliage than a high-pitched song would. Now that the blackbird has become a garden bird, it brings this deeply rural note to our towns.

They are still very nervous birds, though, fleeing with a clattering cry at the least hint of danger, and are also very aggressive when they are among other birds. Song-thrushes seem to have diminished in numbers in gardens in recent years, but it has been suggested that this may be partly an illusion. Song-thrushes, it is argued, will not venture out on to a lawn while blackbirds are feeding there, so if blackbirds are attracted by crumbs, it seems as though the song-thrushes have vanished. I think there may be something in this theory.

### DERWENT MAY

What's about Birders — look out for hobbies hunting for food for their young. Twickers — look out for a squacco heron at Ely, Cambridgeshire and a buff-breasted sandpiper at Cley, Norfolk. Details from *Birdline*, 0891 700222. Calls cost 40p a minute cheap rate, 50p at all other times.

### ON THE SPOT: MONTGOMERY, CENTRAL WALES



Rural recommendations

The place: THE CHURCH YARD Montgomery, Powys.

The view: east towards England is a view of pagan Comdon (about 1,700ft). By contrast, the gentle Camlad flows in a valley in between this huge dark hill and Montgomery. Turn to the north and the Camlad flows into the River Severn, and you'll sight an old Roman road running towards Welshpool. Return to the town and you will find one of the few untouched Georgian main streets in Wales.

The appeal: Montgomery has that small-town feel that you want from a family home: the countryside is stunning in a cultivated way.

Afficionados: a few wealthy Londoners have bought weekend homes in the town but mainly it's populated by families who have lived there for decades. Visitors support a superior little café and the art gallery.

Historical interest: the town and its castle were built in the Middle Ages by men from Berwick. Cromwell slighted the castle in 1649 and locals later used any bits they could find to build Montgomery into a fine new Georgian town. When the Earl of Powys refused to let the railway line come within a few miles of Montgomery, power and commercial activity transferred to a new town (known as Newtown), built alongside the Shropshire Union Canal and railway line. Montgomery ossified as a result. Today it's like stepping back in time.

Time to visit: from the churchyard you often get lovely sunsets across the Camlad valley, so it's best to arrive in the afternoon, have tea at the Castle kitchen tearooms and walk round the town before, hopefully, seeing Comdon bathed in the setting sun.

How to get there: The M6/M54/A5458 will get you to Welshpool, from which there is a verdant route out of the Severn Valley through Forden (A490/B4388), which affords a view of the whole town as you approach south along the old Roman road.

OS reference: Sheet 137, Grid Ref: 223/965.

Also nearby: the Dragon pub and hotel is fine but not cheap; the Courage Inn is cozy; best is The Three Tuns, which brews its own beer.

ADRIAN MOURBY

### WIN A SURFBOARD

The Times has teamed up with Cherry Coke to give away a limited-edition hand-crafted surfboard worth £1,500, made by surf expert Simon Leddy. To win it, all you have to do is name the two male stars of the film *Point Break*, and send your name, address and a daytime telephone number, with your answer to Cherry Coke's question, "What's your favourite surf spot?" to Cherry Coke, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Answers must reach us by August 12 1997, when the first correct answer opened will win. The winner's name will be published on August 16.

No correspondence will be entered into. No Purchase Necessary. Normal Times rules apply, which are available on request. Open to residents of Great Britain over 16 only. Cherry Coke and Coca-Cola are registered trademarks of The Coca-Cola Company.



# A chorus of anxious voices

Classical musicians and composers alike have reacted with horror to the threat of a hostile takeover and asset stripping at Boosey & Hawkes, the music publisher

Sir Harrison Birtwistle grew up playing a Boosey & Hawkes clarinet. James MacMillan's first instrument was a second-hand Hawkes cornet. Birtwistle, our most eminent composer and famous for his uncompromising independence, chose to be published by Boosey & Hawkes in 1994, making it clear where the company's reputation stood. MacMillan, too, is now a Boosey & Hawkes composer. When his Clarinet Concerto was premiered this year on a Hawkes clarinet, he felt he had come full circle.

They are not alone. Every child in Britain who is actively involved in music will have hired his or her first instrument from Boosey & Hawkes. As the children grow up, they buy professional instruments and scores from the same company. But this international music institution, revered equally for the quality of its instruments, educational music and steadfast commitment to living composers, is now under threat of a hostile takeover bid that could result in division and, inevitably, asset stripping.

The music world has reacted with shock to the news. Boosey & Hawkes, with profits of £7.7 million last year, is something of a miracle in the current classical climate. The rub is that 45.3 per cent of its shares are owned by Carl Fischer Inc, a private American publisher. Its shareholders, since the recent death of Walter Connor, their president and former Boosey & Hawkes chairman, want to sell to the highest bidder. The concern is that no one buyer, except B&H itself, would have the competence to take on the whole company. Inevitably, a large instrument manufacturer would want the lucrative Hawkes division and one of the music multinationals — such as EMI, Warners or Polygram —

would see the publishing back catalogue as ripe for exploitation.

Wednesday's letter to *The Times* from the great and the good of the music world was a call to arms. Boosey & Hawkes is far more than a highly successful classical music company. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the future of music depends on it. Since the bold moves of Ralph Hawkes, Erwin Stein and Ernst Roth to garner composers such as Kodaly, Stravinsky, Britten, Strauss, Bartok and Prokofiev during and after the last war, it has had an astonishing record of musical patronage, of choosing the right composers and building a new repertoire for musical posterity.

Only this year Magnus Lindberg, one of the most exciting and established Finnish composers, asked to join its list. He will be in good company. The senior Russian composer Sofia Gubaidulina, whose Viola Concerto received rave reviews this week, is one of B&H's.

As for its Americans, the list reads like a roll call of the century's greatest, from Copland and Bernstein to the eminent modernist Elliot Carter and the vibrant minimalist Steve Reich. John Adams and Michael Torke.

In taking on these composers, often when they are young and unknown, B&H directors do not think of short-term profit. Music publishers nurturing new music have to think in decades and centuries, not financial years. While Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto, still in the 75-year copyright, will be a big earner, music written today will not.

As Birtwistle explains: "Music publishing is not generally understood. Book publishers sell books, but music publishers create scores



A Boosey & Hawkes tuba being put through its paces before it is allowed to leave the instrument factory in Edgware, north London.

and parts for performance. My scores are available, but you wouldn't buy one; it would cost about £100.

"I am writing a piece for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. [Daniel] Barenboim insists he has the printed parts as soon as they are written. This is a major undertaking which would be impossible for me — I'd need another two years. If I hadn't had a publisher, I don't know what would have become of me. I'd be sitting in

some garret writing for small ensembles."

The concern is that a pop-dominated multinational would have no interest in maintaining this expensive service, as MacMillan explains: "I have been nurtured by Boosey's. I chose them, ironically, because the name is synonymous with security. They take personal care of their composers. They discuss my work and what I'd like to do, advise me on performances and commissions, produce marvel-

lous scores, turn out orchestral parts with amazing speed — a pop publisher would have no idea what's involved. It would be a tragedy if a shark came in to milk the back catalogue and run down the contemporary music side. The whole edifice could crumble."

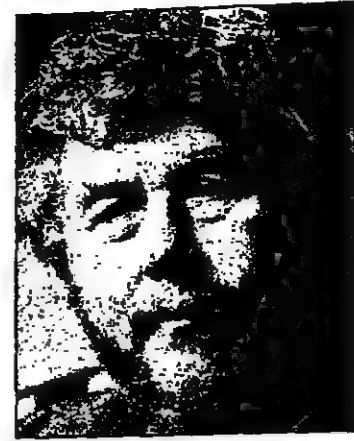
When he left Universal Edition in 1994, Birtwistle chose Boosey's "because they were a thoroughly professional organisation". He is sceptical that a company dominated by high-sales recordings would

have any commitment to the laborious art of publishing and promoting new music: "They wouldn't be remotely interested. They may produce some contemporary discs, but I'd say that was pretty cosmetic, just window-dressing."

It is not only the living composers who fear the threat of a multinational takeover. The estates of deceased composers are just as anxious that their music be sensitively handled and protected, as Oleg Prokofiev and John Stravinsky registered in *The Times* letter. But even if a reputable firm were to take over the publishing side, the splitting of the company would have huge repercussions, not least by destroying a powerful brand. The two sides of the business reinforce each other and, bridged by the strong educational music division, provide a complete music service. One early casualty could be the instrument factory in Edgware, north London. If a foreign company, such as Yamaha or Steinway/Seimer, took it over, the board of Boosey & Hawkes has indicated that it is exploring ways to provide the shareholders of Carl Fischer with liquidity and those of B&H with a continuing interest in a listed company. This would be fatal to the ears of the minority shareholders who, at the recent B&H AGM, made it clear they had no interest in selling their valuable shares and getting stung with capital gains tax. Technically, they could block any proposed deal.



MacMillan: a B&H composer



Birtwistle: published by B&H

In a classical music world obsessed with short-term profits, complications and regurgitation of every sort, the integrity, long-term vision and business acumen of B&H make it a commodity beyond price.

HELEN WALLACE

The author is deputy editor of BBC Music magazine.

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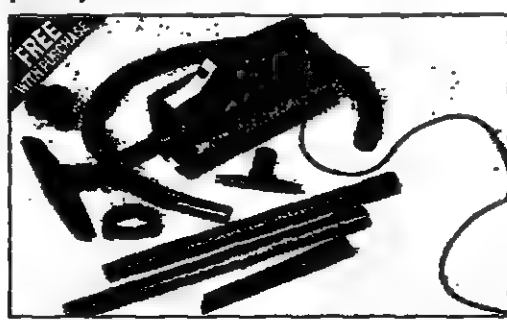
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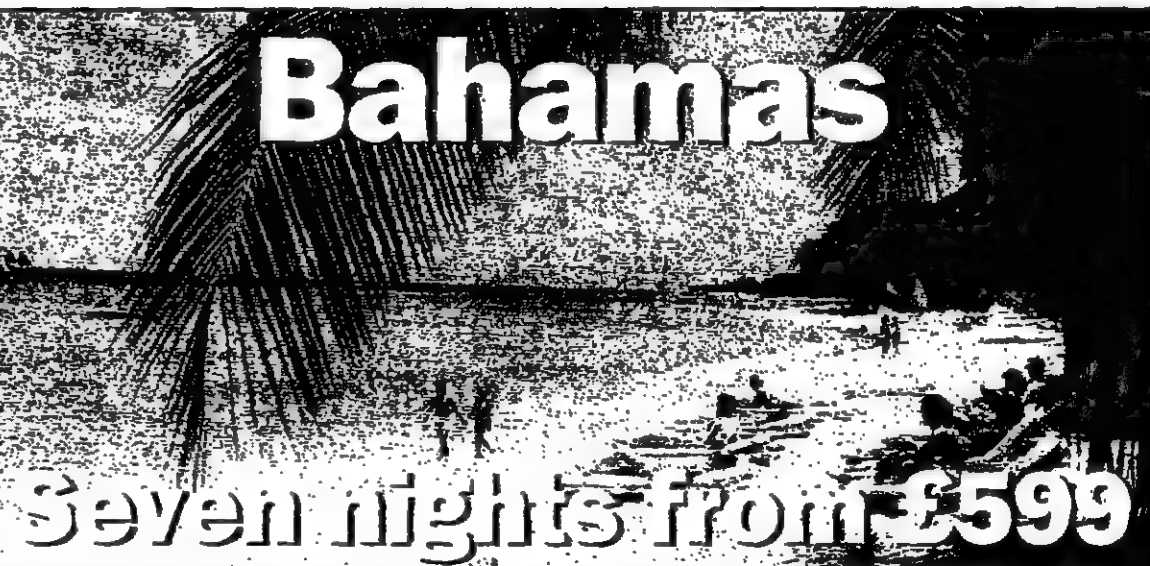
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## Tropical retreat for wannabe Crusoes



Back to the land: The islands of the Mindanao area of the Philippines offer a surprisingly green backdrop of rolling hills, but the Filipinos themselves do not regard this fine tropical landscape as their most important attraction

Excuse me, Madam, — and for a moment he looked embarrassed — but to reduce the swelling, we urinate on it." He could have saved his embarrassment. This was practical knowledge I was happy to know: a theoretical lesson by my Filipino guide, should I snorkel my way into the local enemy — prickly sea urchins, found in their dozens in the shallow waters of the southern islands in the Davao Gulf.

We spoke solemnly about other aquatic unpleasantnesses and then, resuming his chatty, anecdotal style — the Filipinos are not a formal race — my guide turned to the subject of green turtles.

The southern islands in the Mindanao area, forming the bottom tip of vast 7,000 island archipelago, have been marked for a kind of tourist debut. Long known in East Asia as a tropical retreat, the islands are now being promoted for the Western market, backed by foreign investment and lots of local confidence.

For those used to the tropics, it is a reassuringly familiar scene: clear lagoons and curvy white beaches, an army or two of palm trees and the brightness of a blue sky. The surprising aspect of the Mindanao area is its hills: a backdrop of rolling green (reminiscent of Derbyshire) climaxing in Mount Apo, the local Himalaya, rising 2,000 metres from the gulf and looking on a cloudy day rather like a Japanese watercolour.

The Filipinos do not list this fine tropical landscape as their first attraction. This is reserved for their native charm. We are "halo-halo", I was told, or "mix-mix" (also the name of a local ice cream); this is a reference to their long colonial history, the advantages of which they view with entertaining irreverence. "Our women are beautiful, powerful and this we get from the Spanish; we are relaxed, philosophical [the Spanish again — 90 per cent of the population are Catholic] and most important of all — here a broad smile, possibly at the contradiction — we know how to have a good time."

No, my hosts insisted, this was not a legacy from the Americans. Although here for 50 years during military occupation, what they have left behind stops at widespread colloquial English and a taste for Winston cigarettes and army Jeeps, now used as taxis for tourists and locals alike.

### Dreams of an idyllic island hideaway can be realised in the southern Philippines

Yes, we are the brown Americans in Asia, but — But their happy-go-lucky attitude is native in origin. Local fishermen, greeting you from their fragile houses on stilts, will be as welcoming as the hotel staff. Everyone has a smile — not least of all the dozens of children who swarm around you and your camera, bees around a honeypot, their innocent vanity begging to provide you with numerous unnecessary portraits.

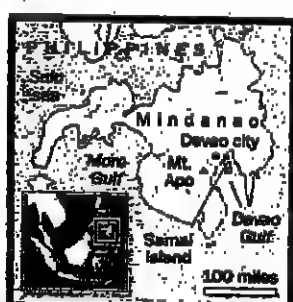
Strange to suggest travelling so far for the advantage of being smiled at so often, but it adds an enjoyable Diana, Princess of Wales aspect to your holiday.

The islands are being cautiously developed along ecological guidelines. The small luxury beach resort on Samal Island is called Pearl Farm (no pearls left, alas) and is preserved as an intimate alternative to the hell of consumer tourism. Built in natural materials to merge with the island's contours and colours, its individual cottages (no ordinary hotel here) open out, back-garden-like, on to white sands and coral beach. Some imitate traditional tribal fishermen's houses — wooden huts on stilts — so that, waking bleary-eyed for breakfast, you are surrounded by shoals of silver fish swimming dizzily round and round in the clear waters.

At night island paths are lit by paper lanterns. In the semi-dark, private parties enjoy beach barbecues (local marlin fish and lobster), sitting cross-legged by the water and served on low tables by cautious waiters who dodge the nighttime hermit crabs making their way to bed, zig-zagging up the beach.

All this is the stuff of good romance where adults start to behave like children, burying themselves up to their thighs in white sand at midnight and subversively disregarding resort rules — feeding local mangosteen fruits to the resident sea-turtle.

Sometimes such communion with unfamiliar tropical nature can be overwhelming. A Singaporean friend, sleepy with drink and warm tropical air, was persuaded by malevolent fancies that the background birdsong accompanying our beach supper — unnaturally throbbing through the dark — was really, truly, a Sony recording on auto-rewind, hidden in the



vegetation around us. It took three waiters to dissuade her from rummaging in dwarf palm trees and bushes of bougainvillea, trying to find the volume control and turn down the sound. No one ever said that being washed up on a tropical island is a culturally dynamic experience. It is not. But it is — perhaps too — thoroughly relaxing.

Of course, the south Philippines is a long way to go just for warm water and a clear view of the night sky. But the diving is excellent: well-suited aquanauts return from the deep, cheerful as puppies, telling tales of bizarre-shaped corals in fantastic colours and surreal encounters with benevolent turtles.

The tourist board likes to boast that it possesses the only island for rent. Buena Vista — eight hectares of palm trees and yours for \$400 (£270) a day (up to five people) — is fast becoming a designer island. The former resident fishing family have been relocated and, in their absence, Indian peacocks have been introduced. They mill around the sands, pecking nervously at the driftwood, suspicious of huge blue starfish washed up on the shoreline and hidden in the coral debris.

It is the quietest place I have ever been — there is no traffic for miles — and, provided with your own cook and staff of waiters, would be a fine retreat for wannabe Robinson Crusoes.

I half-suspect though that the Filipinos hope their guests, lulled by this paradise experience, might spontaneously develop, Jekyll and Hyde style, a rebellious desire for lewd entertainment. They have certainly provided for the event. A boat trip at night across the lagoons (Dante gliding through the Inferno has nothing on this) transports you to the bright lights of Davao city — and an arena of promiscuous leisure. Baccarat, blackjack and craps are big in Davao — as are karaoke, uncompromising female striptease, sweaty discos and late-night shopping.

However, like Cinderella's godmother, I must issue a warning: do not wait to see Davao at dawn. The real delights of the Philippines are the islands and reefs, not the modern urban development. Prolific for the evening, but be sure to catch the boat back to paradise.

SOPHIE JAMES

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### PHILIPPINE ISLANDS FACT FILE

■ The author travelled to Davao via Singapore on Singapore Airlines (0181-747 0007) and the subsidiary airline Silk Air (book through Singapore Airlines). Fares start from £600 (exclusive of tax) from September 1 to December 9.

■ Brochures for the Pearl Farm Beach Resort, Malapeno Island — an extension of the resort, which offers private villas — can be obtained through the Philippine Department of Tourism in London on 0171-499 5443.

■ Prices per night for Pearl Farm Mandaya House beachfront cottages begin at \$241 (£145). Buena Vista can be booked for day groups (up to 30 people) for \$1,200 (£750). Both the Pearl Farm Beach Resort and Buena Vista can be booked through the Insular Century Hotel (006 332 234 3050).

■ Diving equipment can be hired (beginner lessons available) throughout resorts in the Mindanao area.

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: *Ghosts of Manila*, by James Hamilton-Paterson (Vintage, £6.99); *Little Brown Brother*, by Leon Wolff (OUP, £9.99); *Lonely Planet Philippines* (Travel Survival) Kit, £12.99.







## Turkey: a cool reception for reader Barbara Bleiman; and an idyllic coastal odyssey for Jill Crawshaw

### A nightmare with a happy ending

The haunting, discordant wail of the call to prayer wafts from the minarets over the village. It is a quarter to five in the morning and it finds me already at prayer, begging with a passion that there should be a return flight to Gatwick that very morning.

We have spent our first night in Turkey, dressed in all our clothes and our pyjamas, shivering under a single blanket in sub-zero temperatures, in a bare room devoid of heat or comfort, with a curtain that does not quite cover the window and a balcony door through which the wintry winds of Asia have been howling all night.

The lovely apartment we had been promised is not yet built and the guest-house is empty, save for one other family from Kent who have been mad enough to be lured by the same offer of a week in Calis Beach in late March. "It's winter," the locals keep telling us. "The season has not started. Everything closed. Swimming pools empty. As if we hadn't noticed."

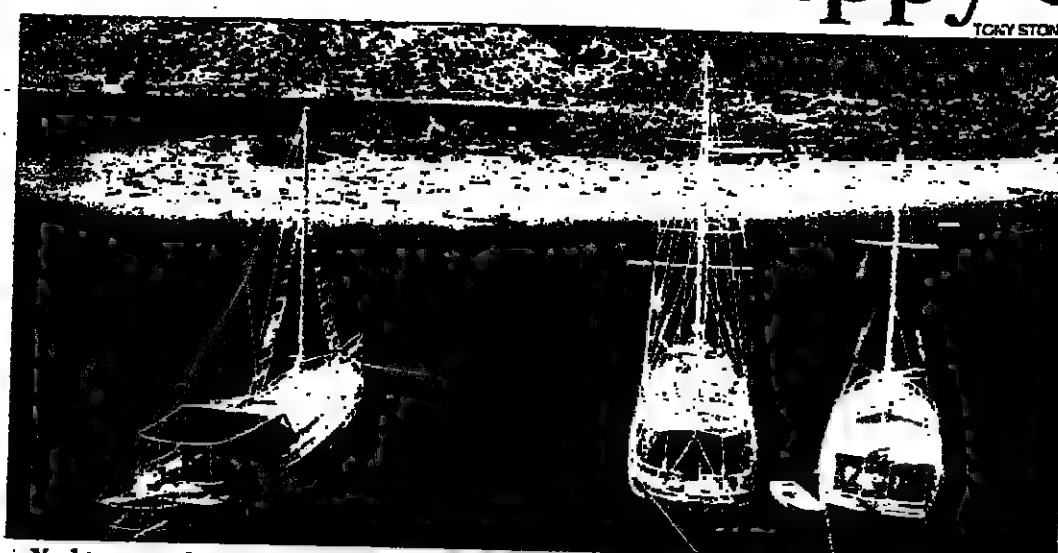
We had arrived at Dalaman airport at two in the morning, to be met by a bus from the guest-house. Hurrying through the mountains in an unheated bus, with two sleepy children slumped on top of us, we had been counting the minutes till our arrival in the lovely little guest-house that had been described to us. After a good night's sleep, we thought, we would rise late, take a dip in the pool and have a breakfast

of freshly baked bread, olives and fruit juice, looking out towards the azure waters of the Mediterranean.

It is morning. We force ourselves out of bed into the bare drabness of the room. A short time later, standing in the piles of rubble and scrubby bush that surround the guest-house, the other English family materialises, our horror mirrored in their faces. "Cold," they quiver. "So, so cold."

It is our first day in Turkey and we are sitting squashed into a dolmus bus, on our way into Fethiye, the local town, to try to salvage the wreck that is our holiday. We are feeling low, but as the bus pulls into the town, the sun begins to streak through the clouds and we are inescapably drawn by the scenes around us: white domed mosques jostling with fruit stalls and an eclectic jumble of ragged houses; boys in spruce navy blazers to school; women in white headscarves and baggy eastern trousers going to the bazaar.

Fethiye is warm and inviting. There is a promenade that runs the length of the seaford, fringed by gardens and walkways, with children's playgrounds, palm trees and views out across the bay to snow-tipped mountains. Shoreline bars



Yachts moored near the beach at Oludeniz. Out of season there is only a sprinkling of tourists

are preparing for the season: at the harbour, fishing boats and yachts sway lazily. Our spirits rise.

We find a hotel right on the harbour, with a rooftop restaurant with views out across the bay. All we want to know is whether there is heating. Are there plenty of blankets? The bemused hotel clerk gives us every assurance. We later discover that the family from Kent has

been there before us.

We book in, hire a car and drive off to collect our belongings and extricate ourselves from the Guest-house from Hell.

The hotel is incredibly cheap — clean, with soft white towels, hot water, friendly staff and spectacular views — but costing less than £20 a night for all of us. We have hired a car at off-season prices.

Food in restaurants looks fresh and appetising. It is also outrageously cheap. We eat a huge meal of savoury pastries, filled with feta cheese and dill or spiced meat, followed by delicate sweet pastries made from pistachios, walnuts and ground almonds, soaked in honey, washed down with apple tea and colas. The bill comes to less than £5. Driving out of Fethiye later in the

week, we discover the beautiful beaches at Oludeniz, with its warm lagoon. In March there is just a sprinkling of other tourists, many of whom have come to paraglide from the 6,000ft mountain tops overlooking the resort.

Everyone we meet is friendly. In fact we begin to wonder if it is just to separate us from our money. But even in tourist areas there is a gentility and kindness that is deeper than our cynical thinking can fathom.

At a beach restaurant in Oludeniz, it turns out that the owner spends the winter in Manchester and the summer in Turkey. He is not yet geared up for tourist meals but offers us what he is having for his own lunch, a set meal for £2 each. He is delighted that we appreciate his "real" Turkish food — yoghurt and mint soup, spicy beans and tomatoes, pasta served with butter and goat's-milk yoghurt, spinach stew with poached egg.

In a predominantly Muslim country, I had expected trouble from men but I am treated with courtesy and directness. But it is our blond-haired, blue-eyed seven-year-old son who elicits the warmest responses of all, not from the Turkish women but from the men. They make a bee-line for him,

patting his head, lifting him high in the air, cuddling him and gesturing to us that we should depart at once and leave him there.

Our equally delightful ten-year-old daughter looks on with bewilderment as to what they could possibly see in her grumpy little brother and relief that she is exempt from this treatment. We explain that kissing and cuddling her is off their agenda as it might be misconstrued. We notice the warmth between males and wonder what has happened to public, innocently affectionate behaviour between men in our own society.

Easier in Turkey, after our nightmare beginning, has been just fine. The nights have been perishing — London has been far warmer — but we have had the benefits of no crowds, off-season prices and lots of friendly attention.

Waiting to catch our plane at Dalaman, we meet the package people who were on the flight out with us. Perhaps next time we will swap our rather risky go-it-alone approach for the safety of a big-name package in a large resort. "Good holiday?" we ask. Their faces are grim. "Freezing rooms! No heating! Rain most days up that end of the coast! Nice reps but not much they could do." We can't help but feel a little smug, and immediately start planning our next do-it-yourself adventure.

## Sunken cities and half-buried memories



Welcome aboard... and please take off your shoes." For Captain Sinan, *Levante*, whose pristine wooden decks he was protesting, was the holy of holies. And indeed, at 88ft she was the queen of gulets, those wooden boats built like the traditional former sponge-diver fleets.

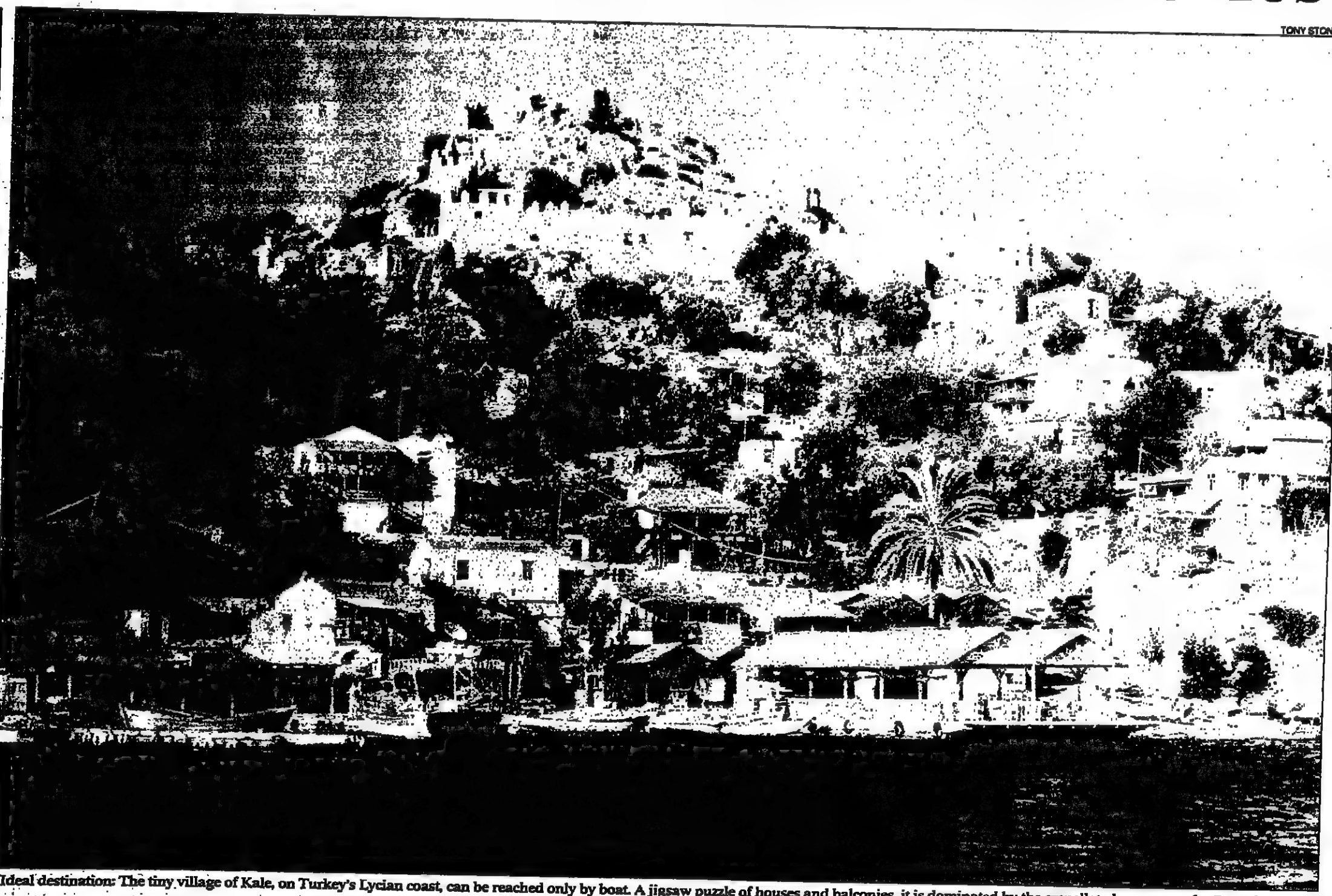
However, it is doubtful whether any of the sponge fishermen would recognise the eight air-conditioned cabins with flush loos and showers, cushioned sunbeds on deck and other creature comforts with which we were cosseted on our mini-odyssey along the Lycian coast.

Having stowed our baggage (in proper wardrobes, no less), we were off, manoeuvring between the chums of yachts, gulets and fishing boats crisscrossing the harbour at Kalkan. A picturesque jumble of local stone houses, restaurants, shops and a few smart hotels, Kalkan can no longer be called a fishing village, but mercifully has not yet acquired the status of a full-blown resort, probably because its beach is so meagre.

Our itinerary, if we can so dignify our meandering wake, lay south-east, encompassing one of the most dramatically beautiful and unspoiled coasts in the Mediterranean. It has been protected for centuries by the brooding Taurus Mountains behind and only recently breached by a road linking it with Dalaman airport and the fleshpots further west.

Believed to originate in Crete, the Lycians proved as wild and daunting as their landscape. This was one of the last regions to submit to being incorporated into the Roman province of Asia Minor, and the inhabitants were feared as sea raiders until the British Navy dominated the coast in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was the remains of this proud race, who built fine cities and buried their dead in ornate rock tombs, that provided the culture stops on our voyage and prevented our minds getting soggy with too much leisure and pleasure.

Maybe if *Levante* had carried her full complement of 16



Ideal destination: The tiny village of Kale, on Turkey's Lycian coast, can be reached only by boat. A jigsaw puzzle of houses and balconies, it is dominated by the crenellated ramparts of a Crusader castle

passengers, or maybe if you happened to join a party dominated by over-hearty Sloanes or beer-swilling boozers, life afloat would be less than idyllic. But in our case, with the boat less than full, there was plenty of room to read or doze stretched out under a shady canopy, to sunbathe on the roof, to ponder the rhythm of the wine-dark seas and to watch the spectacular sunsets over glasses of chilled wine.

Breakfast was always on deck at 8am, with bread and cheese, salami, olives, tomatoes and local honey, and then it was up anchor and away. At some time in the morning we would steal into a deserted

cove for swimming in the clearest water I have ever experienced, and sometimes we would venture ashore. Kas was the first port of call, to plunder the carpet shops and explore its jigsawed alleys lined with old wooden Ottoman balconies. Like Kalkan, Kas has got just about the right balance between local life and tourism and I found it charming.

Back on board, Sabri, the ship's cook, would have made lunch — a feast of aubergine, courgette and tomato casserole, "boreks", the mouth-watering cheese pastries, heaped salads and yoghurt.

In the afternoon we would moor in the lee of uninhabited islands and over sunken cities such as Kekova, with its ruined arches and lintels shimmering enticingly in the translucent water. Half-submerged or scattered randomly on the shore were the squat stone sarcophagi in which Lycians, buried their lesser ranks. Their nobles were entombed with all the appendages necessary for a comfortable afterlife (in-

cluding, some say, their wives) in decorated rock tombs carved out of the hillside at Myra, which we visited on an excursion from Demre.

There is little of interest in the market town of Demre itself, though it was once the home of a 4th-century bishop, St Nicolas — "Noel Baba" to the Turks. Santa Claus to us, who earned his reputation, it is said, by dropping purses of gold down the chimneys of poor village girls as dowries to enable them to marry.

The basilica in his honour now lies in ruins among the tranquil, shady rose gardens on the outskirts of Demre, between the St Nicolas barndis — which has also seen better days — and a scruffy block of flats.

After dusty Demre, it was a relief to return to *Levante*, we had become just as possessive about her sleek patrician lines as our captain. Every so often

a lesser breed of gulet attempted to overtake us, but we steered clear to find our own bit of paradise.

By common consent, Kale was the highlight, the tiny village that could be reached only by boat and which was crowned by the crenellated ramparts of a Crusader castle. Among a jigsaw puzzle of houses and pensions, balconies dripped bougainvillea and gardens brimmed with hollyhocks and figs; children played among the ruins of sarcophagi and the women displayed their embroidery on fallen columns. These were the same women who chased us energetically to sell their wares as we scrambled up to the castle.

We sailed homewards out of Kale into yet another glorious sunset, browsed over the captain's intriguing old Admiralty charts, lingered long into the night over supper and wine — and spun our web of dreams for next year.

#### FACT FILE

■ Savile Row Tours (0171-625 3001) offers three and seven-night cruises on *Levante* from Kalkan, which can be combined with other holidays ashore at Kalkan, Kas or Kale.

■ The three-night cruise costs £190-£220, including all meals with wine or soft drinks, and shore excursions. Seven-night cruises cost £330-£360. Children sharing with adults cost £70 for a three-night cruise, £125 for seven nights.

■ For 1995 Savile is offering a Lycian coast cruise primarily under sail on *Argosia*, a 130ft three-masted schooner with family accommodation.

■ Visas: British visitors need a £10 visa on entry at Turkish airports.

■ Getting around: Car hire costs £255-£275 a week, inclusive. A dolmus, or shared taxi, is one of the cheapest and most convenient ways to get around between towns and beaches. Taxis are also inexpensive.

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends *Ancient Turkey, A Traveller's History*, by Seton Lloyd (British Museum Press, £10.95), *The White Castle*, by Orhan Pamuk (Faber, £6.95), *Crusades: Western Turkey* (£12.95).

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## France: Exploring the old city and the hills of Nice; and popping over to Impressionist Honfleur ...



There's modern luxury in view when you look west over the terracotta roofs of Nice, but most travellers prefer the delights of the old town, such as the flower market

## Old gems beyond the glitz

Whoever said Nice is a city of olives, stony beaches and pizza got it wrong. Across terracotta rooftops and gleaming mosaic tiles is the bustle of Old Nice.

The daily Marché aux Fleurs at Cours Saleya exudes Italian-style vivacity and heady spicy aromas. Old women in coloured aprons sell morning-picked vegetables and hot socca (egg-pancake); weather-beaten old men offer local and Corsican cheeses. There's fish, too. And on Mondays, the market becomes the Marché Brocante, selling antiques and bric-a-brac at low prices.

Follow the aroma of fresh bread to André Esposito's bakery in Rue Droite where, twice a day, in an old wood-burning oven, he bakes at

least 32 different types of bread, including stone-ground shepherd's, wholewheat onion, garlic, nut, olive and thyme breads, and sweet squares of *tourte blette*, a sweet double-crust tart of Swiss chard, pine nuts and raisins dusted with icing sugar.

Just off the market is La Meranda bistro; when there's a rickety old bicycle outside with an empty pannier, the locals know Jean Guisti is back from market and cooking at his stove. Guisti's dishes are the essence of Niçois cuisine. Stockfish, the pungent signature dish of Nice, was brought from Norway in the 18th century by trading vessels which fetched olive oil from Nice. At La Meranda it's made with dried cod soaked for four days in a barrel of running

water, which sits in the corner of the 20-seater bistro. The fermented fish is then stewed for hours with onions, tomatoes and white wine. It goes well with the house wine from the Var, as do the lightly fried courgette flowers and the fragrant strands of fresh spinach pasta topped with pesto.

Guisti does not accept credit cards, has no telephone and refuses to serve anyone he dislikes, but at lunch and dinner the place is packed. Only venture in if the "Complet" ("Full") notice is not posted on the door, or you'll hear Guisti complain from his small but spotless kitchen: "Can't you read? We're complet."

Skip dessert and head for Square Rossetti and, in the shade of the Baroque-style Cathedral Saint-Repère,

choose from 70 flavours of home-made Italian ice-creams (including lavender, violet, rhubarb, tomato-basil, thyme and maraschino) prepared by Maison Fenocchio.

At the foot of elegant, shady Cimiez hill forsake the baking sun for Marc Chagall's Musée Biblique. The low-slung modern building is decorated with stained-glass windows and mosaics donated by the artist. The Zen-like museum is among olive trees and houses the famous "Biblical Message" and the 17 paintings that make up the series "Song of Songs". Based on the Old Testament, they incorporate Jewish folklore and Chagall's memories of his childhood in Russia. On the brow of Cimiez hill

stands the imposing Hotel Regina, where Queen Victoria sometimes took up residence to escape the harsh British winters. By-passing the fleshpots of Nice, she cruised by ship along the coast to visit Cap Ferrat and Cap d'Antibes. Her statue gazes down the hill with a puzzled expression, no doubt a little perturbed that Marks & Spencer has opened in Nice.

Another famous Regina resident was Henri Matisse, who died while decorating the walls of his room with sensual nudes. When staff found him, he still had a paintbrush in his hand, and a quizzical look on his face.

The entire span of Matisse's life is housed in his former studio, a handsome 17th-century villa opposite the Hotel Regina. The base of the

museum was a donation by Matisse and now contains a vast collection of sculptures and personal possessions. The old boy is buried in the nearby Cistercian monastery of Cimiez, which overlooks the city. His secluded grave is in an olive grove, once owned by the artist, and within ear's reach of the annual July jazz festival.

High on the hillside above Nice the vineyards of Bellet have produced wine since the 15th century. As you approach the village of St Roman-de-Bellet, take a sharp left at the Auberge de Bellet. On a little side road you will find the village store run by Jacques and Edith Plumail.

The couple speak English and specialise in picnics. I bought steaming paella, a selection of delicate local goat's cheese, a cartwheel of *tarte tropézienne* and a bottle of Bellet white wine.

The best of the Bellet wines is produced at the 15th-century Château de Bellet, run by Ghislaine and Catherine de Charnacé, descendants of Baron and Baroness Bellet. Forty thousand bottles of red, white and rosé are produced annually on just ten hectares of land, where alpine winds freshen the earth and salty sea breezes temper the hot summer sun. M de Charnacé may part with a few bottles, but most are spoken for well in advance.

On returning to Nice, raise a glass of red in the bar of L'Univers, on Boulevard Jean Jaures, to Jacques Médecin, the discredited but much-loved former mayor of Nice, last heard of in Punta del Este in Uruguay, farming giant garlic to export to France.

MARGARET KEMP

## Cider and duck with Boudin

Honfleur, on the Seine estuary, was once a day-trip by steamer from Le Havre; now it's an easy weekend break from London. The opening of the Pont de Normandie, the world's largest cable-supported bridge linking Honfleur to Le Havre, has brought the resort even closer.

You can drive off an overnight ferry in Le Havre, as I did, and be eating your croissants by the harbour in Honfleur 20 minutes later.

The new bridge has become a tourist sight in its own right, with a visitor centre, but to me it is Honfleur's older sights which appeal, such as the twin-towered church of St Catherine, built entirely of oak by 15th-century shipwrights to give thanks for the end of the Hundred Years War. Intended as a temporary building, the church survives today, separated from its belfry across the square. With a little imagination, you could be standing in an upturned ship.

The greatest pleasure is to be had in simply strolling the narrow streets, pausing for a coffee here, a crêpe there, and watching the boats bob up and down in the harbour.

The very names of the streets conjure up images from the town's history: Rue Brûlée (presumably by once burned down), Rue de la Prison, where the old 16th-century jail forms part of a museum.

As you wander along the Rue de la Petite Boucherie, spare a thought for the changing nature of commerce: this pretty lane of half-timbered houses and galleries was once a bustling thoroughfare dripping with blood from butchers' hooks.

Honfleur has long attracted artists, but its heyday came in the mid-19th century when Eugène Boudin and his friends formed the Honfleur school of painters, which later, as a result of a critic's barb, became known as the Impressionists. A group of them (including Boudin's pupil Monet) would meet at St Simeon's Farm to drink cider, play dominoes and paint. Then, "la célèbre mère Toutain" would "generously pour out cider under the apple trees". Now the farm is a Relais et Châteaux hotel, where a glass of cider costs a small fortune and, if you have £80 to spare, you can enjoy an eight-course banquet of langoustines, foie gras, lobster and pigeon.

I stayed at the Hares de la Griserie, a stud farm close to the village of Gennevilliers, four miles out of town. The owners, Nadiana and Jean Ouaknine, are from Gascony and continue the culinary traditions of their native region, keeping geese and ducks and cooking with goose fat rather than Normandy butter.

The menu is best summed up as "100 things to do with a dead duck". But, after the foie gras and slices of grilled duck breast, with cheese and salad and apple tart and all for £20.

TONY KELLY



The quay at Honfleur, ideal for a quiet stroll and a drink



## FACT FILE

■ The author travelled with Calvados Tourism and P&O European Ferries. P&O (0990 980980) has three sailings daily from Portsmouth to Le Havre. Prices start at £59 for a three-day ticket, valid until Sept 14.

■ The Pont de Normandie linking Le Havre to Honfleur has a toll of Fr32 (€3), which can be paid by credit card.

■ Accommodation: La Ferme St Simeon, Rue Adolphe-Marais, has double rooms from £75, bookable through Relais et Châteaux (0800 960239). Hares de la Griserie, Gennevilliers, 14600 Honfleur (00 332 31 987 453) has double rooms for £100, breakfast £2.50, four-course dinner with aperitif and coffee, £15.

■ Further information: Office de Tourisme, Place Arthur Boudin, 14602 Honfleur (00 332 31 992 330), or France Information on 0891 244123 (calls charged 50p a min).

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171 229 5260) recommends: *Croix Chanaan*, by Julian Barnes (Penguin, £5.99); *Selected Short Stories*, by Guy de Maupassant (Penguin, £10); *Blue Guide, Normandy* (£9.99).

who's complaining? But back to Boudin.

Much of the artist's work is on display in the museum carrying his name, along with contemporary paintings of Honfleur which show how little it has changed in the past 200 years. As well as scenes of life at St Simeon's Farm — a woman breastfeeding, men drinking — Boudin specialised in paintings of "my little women", society women on the beach at Trouville with their parasols and elegant frocks.

You can see their less modestly dressed successors on a drive along the coast to Trouville and swankier Deauville, where film stars gather each August to buy racehorses, walk *les planches* and wind down with a spot of thalassotherapy. But after a day among the jet-set, it is a relief to return to Honfleur, which may be pretty but is not pretentious. You don't have to do anything — just stroll along the quay, sit down, order a drink and become a part of the prettiest picture in France.

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**NICE FACT FILE**

■ The author travelled with Montpellier Travel (0171-589 3400), which mixes and matches latest hotel and flight prices to suit.

■ Other British tour operators include Unicorn Holidays (01582 834400), which offers three nights in the Relais & Châteaux Mas d'Arigny property with flights and car hire from £740. Several airlines fly direct to Nice, including British Midland (0345 554554), with flights from £149 return.

■ Accommodation: Hotel les Orangers (00 334 9387 5141) offers B&B at £20 a night. On the plush side, the seafaring Hotel Negresco (00 334 9316 6400) has a two-night deal for two people at £180 per person, including fruit, cocktails, breakfast in bed, newspapers and one dinner. The deal includes a pass to the 28 museums in 13 towns participating in this summer's major exhibition *The Côte d'Azur and Modern Art 1918-1958*. Outside Nice, and perched on a cliff top, the Hotel Chevre d'Or (0800 964470) has four-poster beds and a sumptuous breakfast from £200 a night.

■ There is free access to all Nice galleries and museums on Sept 7, Oct 5, Nov 2 and Dec 7. The *Visitez Sans Compter* is a "passport" offering unlimited access and priority entrance to 58 museums and monuments on the Côte d'Azur. For details call 00 334 9352 3325.

■ The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: *Tender is the Night*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald (Penguin, £5.99); *Cadogan Guide, Côte d'Azur* (E12.99); *Michelin French Riviera* (E8.99).

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# A tale of treasure and treachery



The magnificent Fontainebleau

On August 17, 1661, Nicolas Fouquet gave a party. The evening, considered by most of the guests to be a stunning success, was to bring the host disgrace, imprisonment and a miserable death 18 years later.

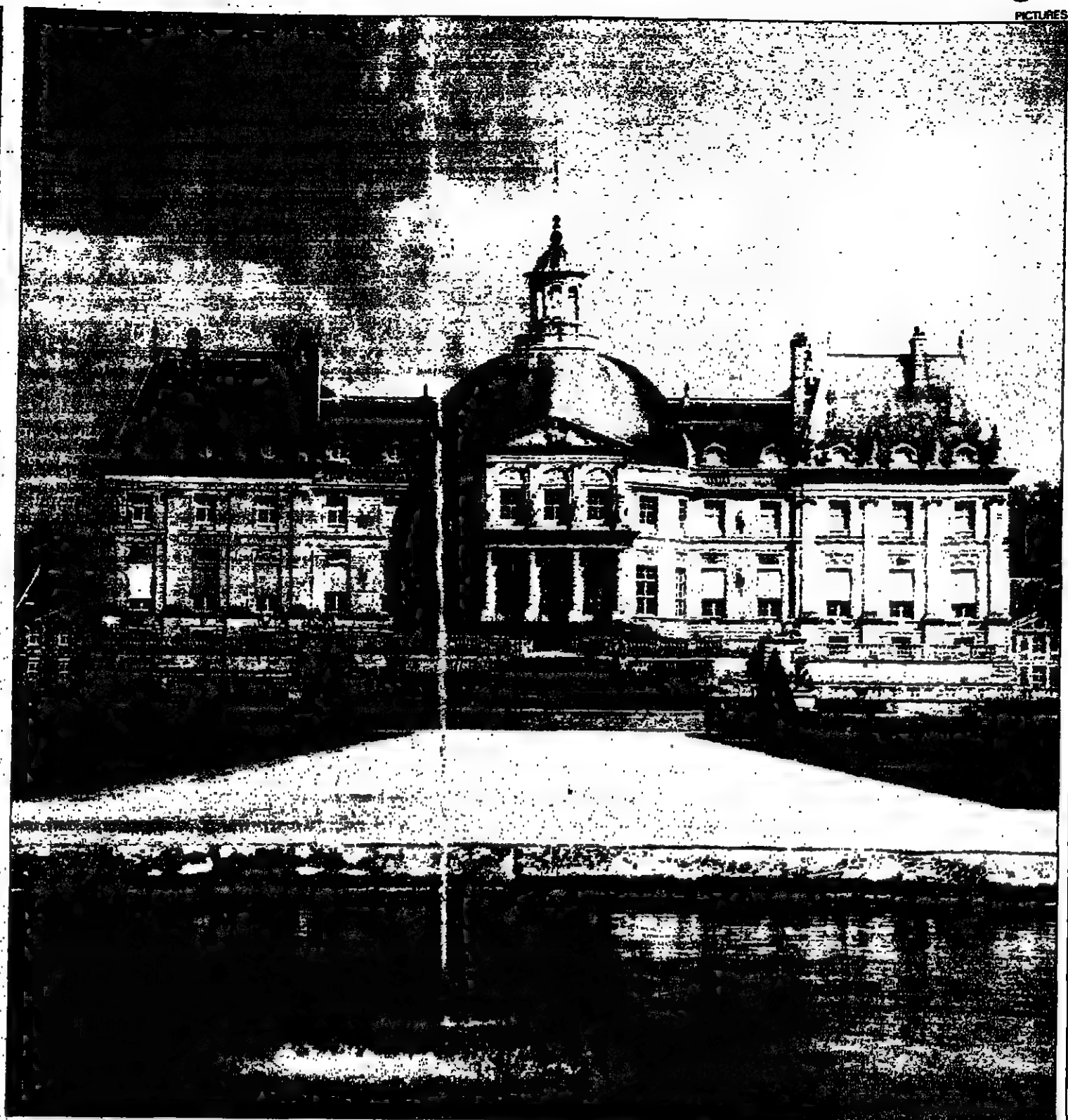
Fouquet was Louis XIV's financial secretary. His father, François, had been one of Cardinal Richelieu's advisers on commercial and maritime matters, and Nicolas himself was one of Cardinal Mazarin's appointments. He found the State Treasury empty after years of catastrophic mismanagement. His task was to refill it. Louis had expensive tastes, and expensive wars to wage. Fouquet, in building up his own fortune, by means which to modern eyes would seem grossly corrupt but which were considered quite normal in the 17th century, was able to guarantee the king's debts.

Fouquet had an implacable enemy, Colbert, Louis's chief minister, who lost no opportunity to blacken Fouquet's name. He convinced the king that all the country's financial ills could be laid at the financial secretary's door. If Fouquet were guilty, then the king's beloved Mazarin could be presumed innocent. Moreover, some normal repairs to Fouquet's property at Belle-Isle-en-Mer could be constructed as a preparation for a plot against the king. Perhaps most crucially, Fouquet's intentions towards Louis's mistress Louise de la Vallière were tantamount to treason.

Clearly, Fouquet must go. But he must suspect nothing. The king's wish to see the most recent improvements at Vaux-le-Vicomte, Fouquet's great house near Fontainebleau, was an easy ruse. The trap was set.

Vaux-le-Vicomte was the most beautiful chateau in France. Designed by Le Vau, decorated by Le Brun, and with gardens laid out by Le Nôtre, it far exceeded in style and impact anything owned by Louis himself. Fouquet's patronage of the arts — his protégés included La Fontaine, Poussin, and Molière — could be tolerated. His extravagance and apparent wish to rival and exceed Louis's grandeur could not. That evening, the king resolved to use the same three men who had been commissioned to create Vaux to help him create Marly and Versailles.

Three weeks later, Fouquet was arrested by an officer of the King's Musketeers by the name of d'Artagnan. A court was briskly convened, but in spite of Louis's known wish that the death penalty should be handed down, the judges recommended banishment. Only to be overruled by a royal decree that



Now restored to its glory days, Vaux-le-Vicomte is a gem of 17th-century architecture, the grandeur of which led to its first owner's downfall

Fouquet should be imprisoned for life in the fortress of Pignerol in the Alps. He died there in March 1680. Alexandre Dumas, besides turning d'Artagnan into one of the great heroes of romantic fiction, wove a story about a man in an iron mask based loosely on Fouquet.

Louis appropriated the contents of Vaux-le-Vicomte, stripping it of paintings, tapestries and sculpture for the embellishment of the Louvre and Versailles. Fouquet's wife and sons were allowed to reclaim the chateau after an interval of 12 years, and it then passed into the hands of the Maréchal de Villars, and in 1764 was sold to the Duc de Choiseul-Praslin, Louis XV's foreign minister. It sur-

vived the French Revolution virtually undamaged but became almost derelict after the fifth duke murdered his wife and then committed suicide. The family was so devastated that it left. The house decayed and the gardens became a wilderness.

It was not until 1875 that the next crucial person in the history of Vaux-le-Vicomte appeared on the scene. Alfred Sommier owned one of the largest sugar refineries in France. He was also devoted to the

arts. It was an ideal combination. Soon the house was not only restored but filled with furniture and decorations from the period of the original building (the Praslins had left two tables, seven paintings, six statues and a bookcase). The gardens had to wait a further 50 years before they were fully restored.

Go to Vaux-le-Vicomte in autumn, when the leaves on the chestnut trees have turned to brown and gold, and walk to the farthest end of the

gardens. There, by the statue of Hercules, a copy of the famous Farnese original, turn towards the house and you will see one of the most perfect vistas in the whole of France: in the distance, the chateau itself, moated but decorative rather than exclusive, a setting for one of La Fontaine's fables or a comedy by Molière. It is the grand siècle in miniature.

CHRISTOPHER SINCLAIR STEVENSON

● Vaux-le-Vicomte is 10km from Melun in the Ile de France, 10km from Fontainebleau (the two great houses can be visited in one day with time for a picnic in the Forest of Fontainebleau, and 40km from Paris).



## Life of leisure amid the pleasures of Provence

High above the seaside frays of Cannes, in the rolling green hills of Provence, Club Med has built one of its laid-back, but eminently relaxing, outposts. Set in sprawling grounds, which appear far larger than the postage-stamp-sized village from which it takes its name, Club Med Opio offers an enticing combination of holiday opportunities.

In classic Club Med style, visitors can immerse them-

selves in a wide range of activities without leaving the grounds, including golf, tennis, swimming, cycling and gym workouts. There is even a small library in one of the bars — with plenty of books in English — for those who just want a little poolside reading.

As with most Club Meds, the activities laid on for children were extensive. In a circus training area, children could learn to walk a tightrope and swing on the trapeze.

And every night, the multi-talented Club Med "GOs" (gentle organizers — the equivalent of Butlins' Redcoats, but with a sunhat) who had been giving tennis and other sporting lessons and pouring cocktails earlier in the day, appeared on stage in impressive song and dance numbers. Who said the music hall era was dead?

As for the food, every meal was a banquet, with dinners including special — but not obligatory — themed nights, featuring the cuisine of Mexico, Greece, America and other foreign lands.

However, despite the wealth of activities and good eating on site, we could not resist taking advantage of the gorgeous South of France locale and decided to divide our time between club activities and the world outside the gate. We were two months away from having our first child and did not know when we would next have the chance to meander through the French countryside without carting around half of Mothercare.

We decided to hire a car and were able to arrange it through Club Med, which has a Europcar office. Unfortunately, our first rental Renault kept slipping out of gear, but there was no problem replacing it.

Once outside the gates, we got a taste of the true Provence. Narrow, winding roads took us through turreted, medieval hillside villages. The most spectacular, but also the most touristy, was Saint-Paul-de-Vence, a fortified village with 16th-century ramparts.

Just as pretty, but less crowded, was Tourrettes-sur-



Harvesting the grapes for a taste of the true Provence



Loup, a village centered on a chateau built in 1437, which features more than two dozen artisans' workshops where painters, sculptors, jewellers and potters sell their wares.

We had an excellent two-course lunch for less than Fr200 (£20) at one of the local bistros. Le Vieux Cellier, where a friendly little black dog kept us entertained.

On another excursion, we discovered a lake which had not been mentioned in any of the guidebooks in the Club Med shop. The Lac de Saint Cassien, which has hardly been commercialised, offers

sailing, sunning and swimming and not much else. After circling the lake and its wooded surroundings, we found our own private beach.

Back at Club Med, in the evenings we were encouraged to share a dining table with people we did not know and join the camaraderie that Club Med fosters among its guests.

It is worth noting that during the low season the majority of Club Med Opio's guests are business people on combination conference-holiday packages, working in the mornings and enjoying the amenities the rest of the time.

The rooms at Club Med Opio were not designed to be luxurious. But they are clean and comfortable, with a television and — in our case — a view of a wooded area.

The GOs are relentlessly cheerful and helpful. Many are working at Club Med in the hope of having their theatrical talent discovered by a holidaying showbiz mogul.

ALEXANDRA FREAN

### FACT FILE

■ Club Med (0171-225 1066) prices start at £964 per adult per week. A child aged two to five costs £371; aged six to 11, £528. The package includes flights, transfers, full board, most sports, evening entertainment and insurance.

■ British Airways (0345 222111) flies daily to Nice from Heathrow, (flights from £161 excluding taxes).

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: *Companion Guide: The South of France*, by Archibald Lyall (Bantam and Brewer, £10.95).

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## South East: Royal Tunbridge Wells turns into *Brigadoon*; Albury Park offers *Four Weddings and a Funeral*



Watched by bemused tourists, a party of fully-costumed players try their hand at a game of cards in the Pantiles at Tunbridge Wells as part of the Georgian festivities

# A stroll back to Georgian times

Do not be surprised if you see Beau Nash strolling the Pantiles at Royal Tunbridge Wells this weekend. He will be presiding as the town's Master of Ceremonies, as though it were 1747, in all his Georgian glory — curly powder-puff wig, sawbuckle shoes, breeches, silk embroidery and silver-tipped cane. Around him will be an A-Z of Georgian characters going about their daily life in this once fashionable health spa. Just like *Brigadoon*, but every year, instead of once in a hundred years, Tunbridge Wells comes alive as it was two-and-a-half centuries ago — until Sunday evening.

'Beau Nash keeps the lower orders in check, including Black Moll, the lusty fortune-teller, and her fiddler companion Crook-finger'd Jack'

whalebone corsets, double-span dress hoops and lace petticoats. Meanwhile, the genteel figure of Mrs Amelia Strode promenades and takes tea and cinnamon biscuits for her public breakfast on the Upper Walks. Beau Nash also keeps the lower orders in check, including the drink-prone carriers of the sedan chair, Black Moll, the lusty fortune-teller, and her fiddler companion Crook-finger'd Jack. Beau Nash can also be found instructing the

town musicians on the bandstand and exhorting the gentlemen and men of letters, such as the Earl of Chesterfield and Horace Walpole, to indulge in port and pipes in the Tiles Chop House.

In the fishmarket, boisterous servants dance to fiddles while the "Quality" perform more civilised steps and dances on the Upper Walks.

The public is encouraged to join in and gossip with the players, but they will find the actors never speak out of

character — no matter how provocative the banter.

The Georgian festivities, known as "Pleasures on the Pantiles" and which started last Wednesday, is all-day street theatre, drawing crowds from home and abroad. "About 5,000 tourists a day visited the town last year compared with fewer than 1,000 before the festival's advent in 1992," says Diane Talbot, of the council's tourism office.

Tunbridge Wells is not as grand as its rival Bath Spa, but is similar in scale to Cheltenham Spa. "We sell ourselves on the atmosphere of the old quarter and the history and etiquette that went with its heyday," Ms Talbot says.

The town's charm quarter is the Pantiles. The colonnaded promenade was first laid in 1638 and runs at an angle to the Chalybeate Spring, discovered by Lord North in 1606. It is elegant in the extreme and named after its original square tile paving, later replaced with Purbeck flagstone.

The hypochondriac Lord North declared miracle properties for the ochre-tinted, iron-tasting spring water and claimed that taking the waters could cure "damp hearts" and "lingering consumptive disorders". Others said it had gynaecological powers. The spa became a haven for eminent invalids after Queen Henrietta Maria convalesced there in 1630 following the birth of her baby (later Charles II).

Rest shelters were first built beside the bubbling spring enclosed by Lord Muskerry in 1664. Coffee houses, with writing materials and news sheets, soon followed. Gaming rooms and lodging houses added sheen to the high-class resort.

During its heyday, from 1735-1761, the Upper and Lower Walks in the Pantiles bustled with dukes and duchesses, earls and barons, authors, statesmen and cads. The Wells was the watering place for the serious-minded but was also famous for its informality.

Besides the festivities, a walk-through exhibition — "A Day at the Wells" — at the Corn Exchange on the Lower



One of the spa town's typical old frontages with balcony

### TUNBRIDGE FESTIVITIES FACT FILE

■ Three hotels have special B&B rates during the festivities. The Jarvis Pembury Hotel, 8 Tunbridge Road, Pembury (01892 823567) is down from £94 to £49 per person a night. The Royal Wells Inn, Mount Ephraim, Royal Tunbridge Wells (01892 511188) costs £32.50 pp, or £45 with dinner. The Wellington Hotel, 84 Mount Ephraim (01892 542911), charge £50 for a double room.

■ "A Twilight Adventure Tour of Georgian Royal Tunbridge Wells" leaves the Pantiles at 7pm this evening. Tickets at £7.50 from the Tourist Information Centre (01892 515675).

■ Binns Corner House, 70/72 The Pantiles (01892 527690) has all-day Georgian fayre for £5.25.

■ "A Day at the Wells" costs £4.50, children £3.50, family tickets £12. Information on 01892 546545.

■ Finchcocks museum, Goudhurst, Kent (01580 211702), open Wed and Thurs throughout Aug, and Sun and Bank Hols until Sept 28, 2-6pm. £5.20, children £3.80, family tickets £12.50.

Walks (on which the plebs were allowed to promenade) is another way into Georgian Tunbridge Wells. Headphones issuing a guided commentary are worn throughout a tour of set-piece scenes with life-size models in Georgian garb (some characters based on Hogarth engravings).

In the Coffee House, the soundscape is of tavern talk, pots banging and fiery ranges. At the Spa Spring Well a local "dipper" dispenses water to aristocratic ladies. In the Assembly Rooms shyders linger by the spinning wheels playing E&O — a form of roulette later outlawed.

After a taste of bygone days you can return to the present with a variety short trips out of

## The house that set Hugh Grant on the road to film stardom

There was something familiar about the place. It was as if I had been to Albury Park before, and yet I knew I had not. The sense of déjà vu became even stronger as I wandered around the grounds and came upon a pretty little Saxon church.

It was as if I was expecting to see some familiar face walking up the overgrown path and past the carved tombstones and stone crosses. It was such a picturesque setting that it should have been in a movie. It would be just perfect for a country wedding, or even a funeral.

That, of course, was why it appealed to the makers of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, starring Hugh Grant. It was the setting for the wedding of Carrie and Hamish, supposedly a baronial estate in Scotland but in fact a stately home in Surrey.

As well as the church, a wing of the house became the Scottish castle, backdrop of the torchlight procession. Albury Park is a picture-book historic home which takes paying guests, and I was lucky enough to have a taste of gracious living in one of two apartments in the rambling house.

There are no red-velvet ropes separating guests from the old leather sofas, the curtain-length royal portraits, the silk-covered Regency chairs and the wooden sculpted overmantels; unlike many other stately mansions which you visit for a day.

"It is not like the National Trust," says Lalage Glaister, who, with her husband Paul, are the live-in administrators of the Grade II listed manor house near Shere. "There is no roping off. You can touch things here. The place is lived in and loved. Guests have complete run of the house."

They can walk at will through the yellow Regency drawing room, shuffle down the stairway designed by Sir John Soane, and browse through old biographies in the 40ft-high library.

Living there is a privilege, the Glaisters say. "The financial side is subordinate. It's a great chance to experience life in one of these grand old houses."

Grand it is. Parts of the house date back to 1042. Previous landlords included the 14th Earl of Arundel, the 1st Earl of Nottingham and the 6th Duke of Norfolk. Much of

the house was redesigned by A.W.N. Pugin. He left it more Tudor than Gothic, with gables and battlements, and put up 63 ornate chimneys.

The house was bought by a member of the Duke of Northumberland's family towards the end of the 19th century. In 1969 it was bought by the Country Houses Association, which converted it into 45 apartments, now the homes of retired generals, group-captains, eminent physicians, a titled lady or two and other distinguished personages.

"This is their house — they are regarded as Albury's co-proprietors — and so it's more homey than a hotel," says Mrs Glaister. "You can relax more and be completely private. It is ideal as a base and for bed and breakfast, but you don't feel obliged to leave the place during the day as one does in a hotel."

There is no room service or hotel bar and lounge, but there is, on arrival, a bottle of wine in the guest apartments, which are fresh, plush and clean.

It is the grounds that give Albury its truly lordly feel. In 1822 the politician and essayist William Cobbett described the gardens at Albury Park as being "without exception the prettiest in England".

The north-facing house stands on a terrace overlooking a shallow valley, split by the slow-moving River Tillingbourne. On the far side, are a pair of parallel lawned terraces — a quarter of a mile long — laid in the 1660s by John Evelyn, the diarist and horticulturalist.

House guests can roam the ancient lines of yews. The layout is considered an early masterpiece of English garden design: the upper terrace has an Italian-inspired semi-circular bathing pool and bath-house to explore.

It's a lifestyle that is very easy to get used to.

### PHILIP LERWILL

● Albury Park, Guildford, Surrey GU5 9BB (01483 225949; double room with breakfast £55 a night, single £35).

● Albury is owned by the Country Houses Association (01892 512800), which offers short breaks at its nine historic homes in the South East, from Aynhoe Park in Banbury, Oxfordshire, to Gosfield Hall at Halswood, Essex. Guests can stay from two to 14 nights but must be CHA members (£1 to join, plus £10 annual subscription).



Four Weddings and a Funeral was shot at Albury Park

### WORLD COVER

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### WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 23

#### SOCJEE

(a) A flour obtained by grinding Indian wheat. Also a nutritious food prepared from this. From the Hindi, Ruth Praver Jhahvala, *To Whom She Will*, 1955: "O she is such a clever girl; kheer she makes, and socjee-halwa."

#### CHATOYANT

(a) Having a changeable, undulating or floating lustre, like that of a cat's eye in the dark. A chatoyant stone, as the cat's eye, the surface and interior of which, when cut and polished, exhibits a floating lustre. Tennent, *Ceylon*, 1859: "The moonstone, a variety of pearly adularia presenting chatoyant rays when simply polished."

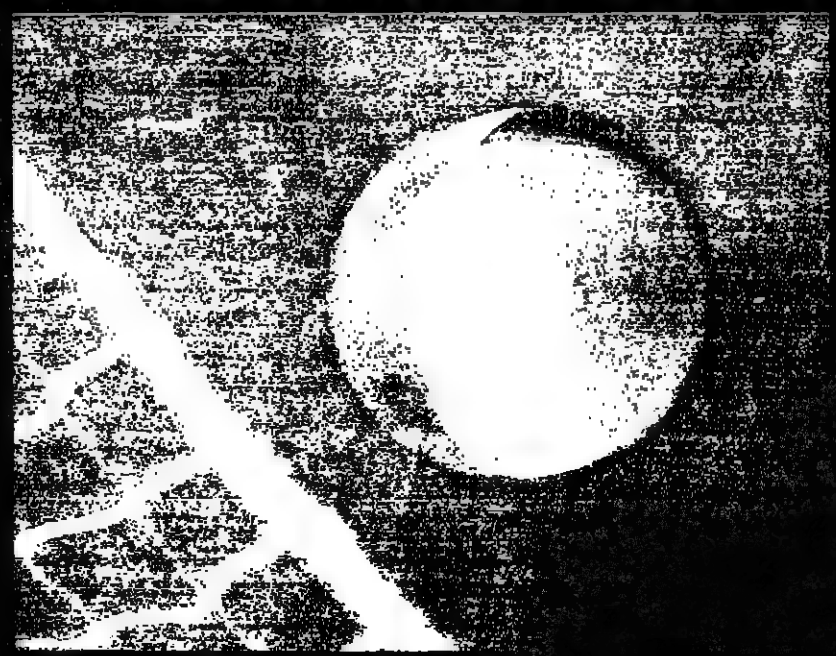
#### LYCOPodium

(b) The fine powder formed by the ripe spores of the species *Lycopodium*. Also known as vegetable brimstone from its flammability. It is used in surgery as an absorbent; also in the theatreland for the production of stage lightning. It is also used in experimental physics as a tracer of the movement or vibrations of a gas produced by sound. "The vibrations of the paper are easily demonstrated by movements of particles of fine sand or Lycopodium strewn upon it."

#### SIGILLATE

(c) To seal up. The Latin for a seal is *sigilla*. "To fasten and as it were to sigillate and affix to the unmercifulness of men."

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## AROUND THE WORLD: A WEEKEND GUIDE

## Will we pay for safer aircraft?

All the rational arguments, all the logic, all the statistics cannot convince a significant minority of aircraft passengers that flying is the safest form of travel. In fact, in the first six months of this year 1,614 people died on the roads of Great Britain. In the same period 231 people died worldwide in air accidents.

Aviation is strictly regulated, especially in Britain, and aeroplanes are built to high standards with three and sometimes four back-ups for every piece of equipment.

Even so, flying could be made safer. Improvements have often been introduced in some countries but not in others. The Foreign Office still advises visitors to China to beware of some of its airlines.

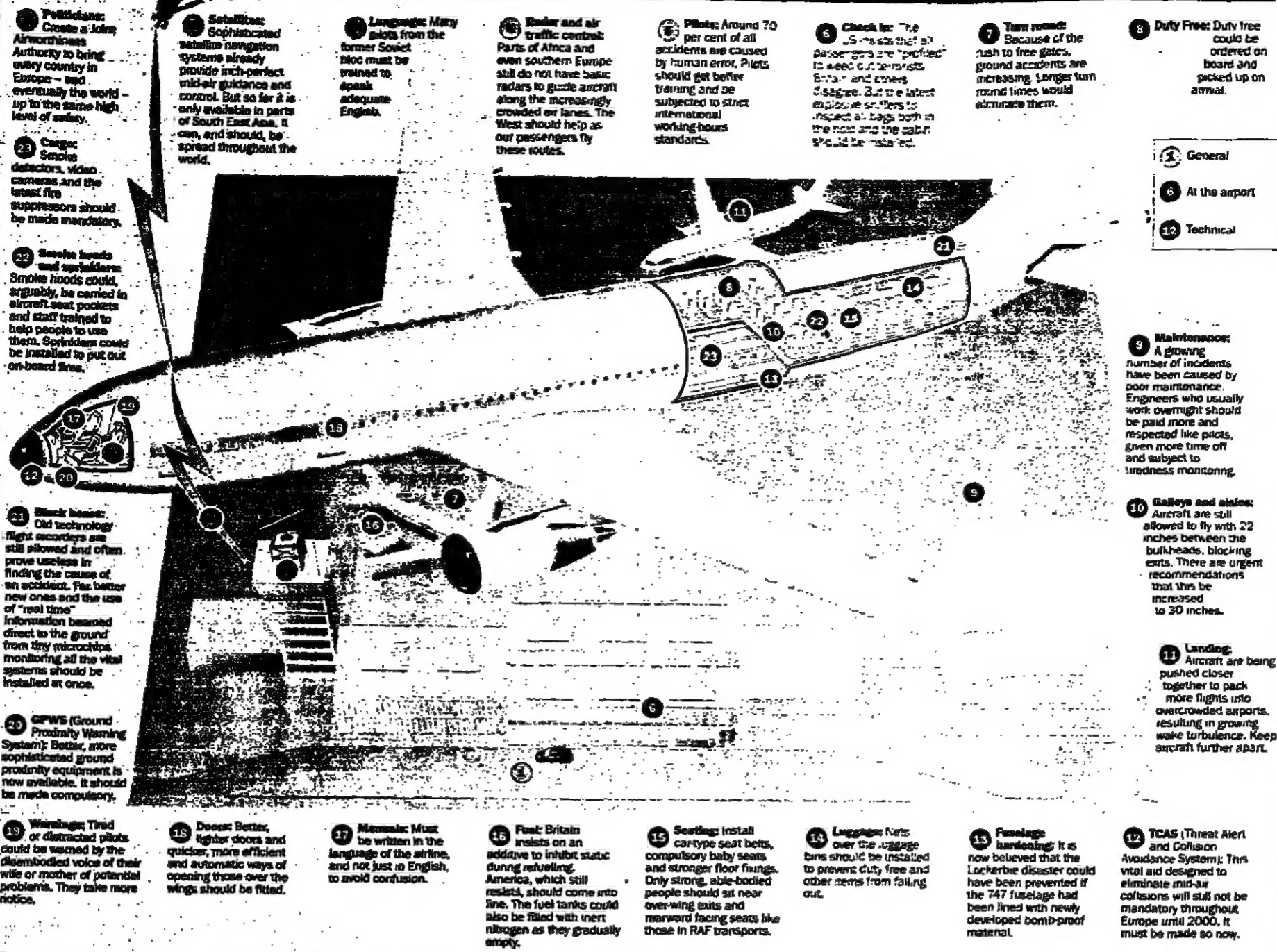
Many of the potential safety improvements do, however, have flaws. To fit smoke hoods, for example, could hold up an evacuation. And to have rear-facing seats would cause problems on take off. Modern jets climb so steeply that instead of being pressed back into a seat, passengers would be left dangling from seat belts.

And improvements costs money. Would we happily pay higher fares or are most of us concerned about getting the cheapest deal?

It is possible to make flying safer, as the graphic shows. The question is when the risk is so small is it worth it?

HARVEY ELLIOTT

## TWENTY THREE WAYS TO MAKE FLYING SAFER



## French lesson in clever leisure

Which is the most popular museum in Paris after the Louvre? You'll not be alone if La Cité des Sciences fails to spring to mind. Although it attracts more than five million visitors a year, and is one of the largest science complexes in Europe, it is still comparatively unknown.

The complex, a converted abattoir at La Villette on the northeastern outskirts of Paris, falls both mentally and geographically outside the traditional tourist circuit of the Champs-Élysées and the Latin Quarter. In fact, La Cité is only 20 minutes from the centre of Paris by Métro. A prettier and more leisurely route is by canal from the Seine.

In 136 acres of parkland, the complex is vast and includes permanent and temporary science exhibitions, a planetarium, an aquarium, a 3-D cinema and a submarine.

The permanent science exhibitions in the Explora section are organised around themes such as energy, mathematics, human behaviour and the environment. There are lots of hands-on exhibits such as the eye-follower, which reveals the complexity of eye movements, or the water-powered rocket which demonstrates the difficulty of launching space craft.

When I was there, however, Explora was curiously empty. Perhaps, like me, visitors are discouraged by the confusing layout of the exhibitions and gravitated towards the star attractions, La Géode and La Cité des Enlants.

La Géode, an Omnimax cinema with a hemispherical 1,000sq metre screen, is to La Cité what the *Mona Lisa* is to the Louvre and is extremely popular. With your field of vision completely filled by images, the effect of travelling to the depths of the ocean or to the edge of space is realistic.

The other highlight of the complex is the well organised and brightly coloured Cité des Enlants. About 4,000 children visit it each day. Here, youngsters who have been dragged round the traditional sights of Paris are in charge. They can crawl under an anthill or inside a kangaroo's pouch, visit the butterfly farm or build a house.

The idea here, as elsewhere in the complex, is "clever leisure". La Cité des Sciences is keen to promote the idea that science is both fun and educational.

LEYLA LYNTON

The author was a guest of Paris Travel Service (01992 450000) and La Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie (01 33 1 40 05 12 12).

## JILL CRAWSHAW'S TRAVEL TIPS

## Venetian festival

THE historical regatta of Venice, one of the city's most picturesque and good-humoured festivals, takes place on September 7. Barges and gondolas with rowers in traditional costumes will sweep down the Grand Canal, racing the Golden Age when La Serenissima and its doges ruled the waves. Horrifically contested gondola races will follow.

Accommodation can be hard to find, but short-break specialist Kirker Holidays (0171-231 3333) has three nights with B&B accommodation, flights and water-taxi transfers for £385.

FROM August 16 to November 9, more than a hundred works by James Whistler will be on show at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Two nights' breaks with Amsterdam Travel Service (01992 450000) are based at the Hotel Fontana, a few minutes' walk from the museum. The cost is from £97, which includes B&B accommodation and ferry crossings. Entry to the museum costs £4 per person.

## Ancient land

ARMENIA, the tiniest of the former Soviet republics - slightly smaller than Belgium - is opening its doors to tourism and visiting Sunvil Holidays (0181-568 4499) as its Travel and Tourist Centre.

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The mountainous country - only 10 per cent of it lies below 1,000 metres - is one of the world's oldest nations. Mount Ararat, its most famous symbol, where Noah's Ark was said to have settled after the flood, is now in Turkey but is clearly visible from Yerevan, Armenia's capital.

In AD 301, the country officially adopted Christianity as its religion. A ten-day tour organised by Sunvil for September includes a visit to Echmiadzin, Armenia's ancient capital and seat of the Supreme Patriarch, and a trip to the 4th to 13th-century cave monasteries at Geghark. Also on the itinerary are Lake Sevan, one of the world's largest mountain lakes set 2,000 metres above sea level, and a Roman temple at Garni.

The tour costs £964 which includes flights via Amsterdam, ten nights' B&B at the air-conditioned Hotel Armenia, 2 Hotel (three-star), and excursions. A visa costing £35 is also necessary.

## Crossed lines

WOULD-BE rail travellers are complaining about the impossibility of telephoning Rail Europe, the spanking new version of what was French Railways in Piccadilly, London.

I tried the 'Info Line' (0990-300 013) which is emblazoned all over the colourful brochure. But it merely shrank me for calling and told me all the operators were busy, asked me to call back and added that lines were open 8am-10pm Monday and Tuesday, 8am-9pm Wednesday to Friday and 9am-4pm on Saturday. The Motorail Line (0171-203 7000) merely gave the engaged signal. Total

number of calls over two days: 19 on each line.

"We're victims of our own success," said a Rail Europe spokesman. "We've had 30 per cent more bookings than last year, double what we expected. We've put in a new system and doubled the staff to 35." His advice? Mondays and Tuesdays are saturated by ringers in the week or early in the evening. "But you can always try the fax: 0171-633 9900," he added.

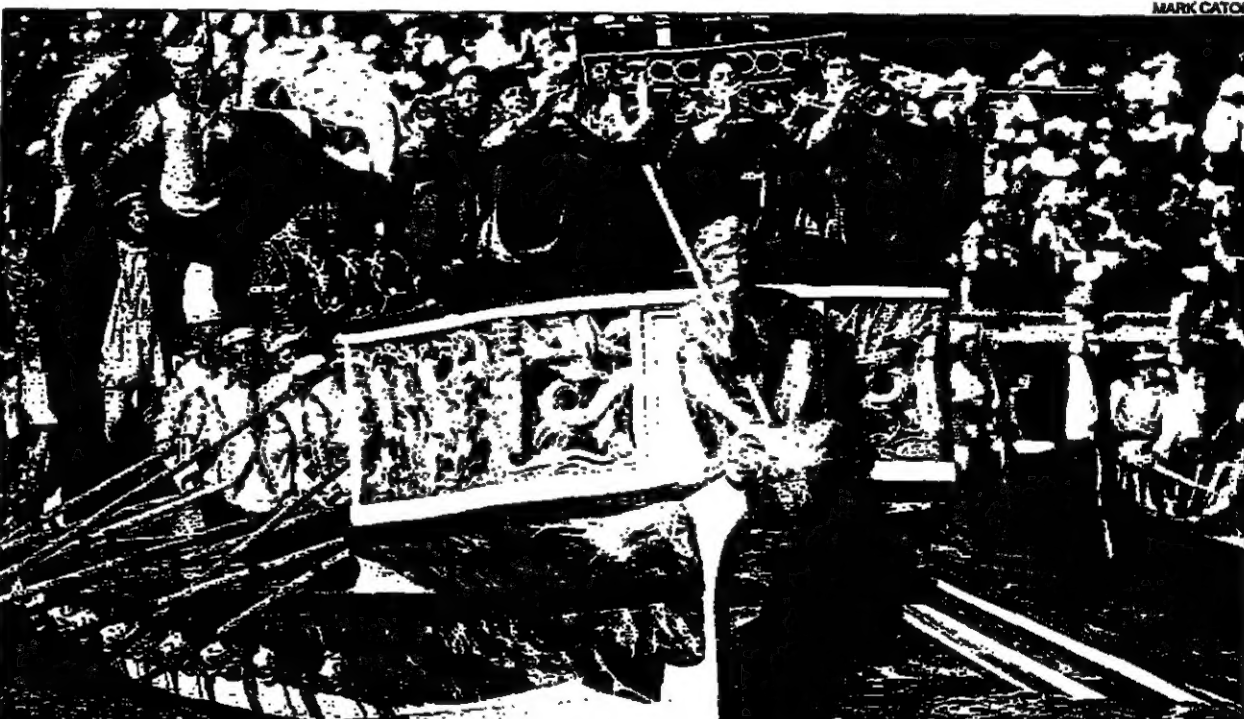
I did and I finally got through - on the fifth call.

KUONI (01306 740500) is introducing charter flights to Agra from October for its winter holidays to northern India. The long-haul specialist firm says Agra is less of a culture shock than Delhi for first-timers to India. An even bigger bonus, the company admits, could be in avoiding the hassles of Delhi airport. On my last visit it took more than 30 officials to process me through. A week's B&B at Agra costs £495-£599; a week at Jaipur £695-£751.

## Single ideas

CLIMBING a mountain in Troodos, bouncing across Iceland in a Jeep, trekking in Bolivia or going in Marrakech are far better ice-breakers than lying on a beach and trying to make conversation, says singles specialist Solo Holidays (0181-951 2800).

To cater for an increasing demand, Solo has packed its winter programme with action specials, ranging from a three-night cycling break in Rutland costing £265 B&B to a two-week Nepalese trek for £1,675. Holidaymakers are divided into the over-thirties and the over-fifties, and although the company attempts to balance the sexes, there are usually more women than men. On the web



Regatta in Venice, when barges and gondolas sweep down the Grand Canal with rowers in historical costumes

question of single supplements. Solo admits to charging these on cruises and in the United States, but "not on most other holidays".

## Refund offer

LAST year Thomson, Britain's biggest tour operator, decided to cut down the purple prose in its brochures and (within reason) tell it like it is, wars and all. It has now gone a considerable step further and promises an early flight home and a full refund to those clients who find their holiday does not live up to the brochure description.

They must report the problem to the Thomson representative within one day of their arrival, giving the company 24 hours to find a solution. If the problem cannot be resolved and the clients are still dissatisfied, Thomson will offer to fly them home and reimburse the cost of the holiday.

## Join Tony Soper for an ISLAND ODYSSEY

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There is so much beauty and interest to be found in our own islands but all too often they are forsaken for a package arrangement to some far-off destination. Some of our most beautiful places are also the most inaccessible, but with the aid of the expedition cruise ship MV Clipper Adventurer we will venture to the remotest isles which pepper the British and Irish coastlines.

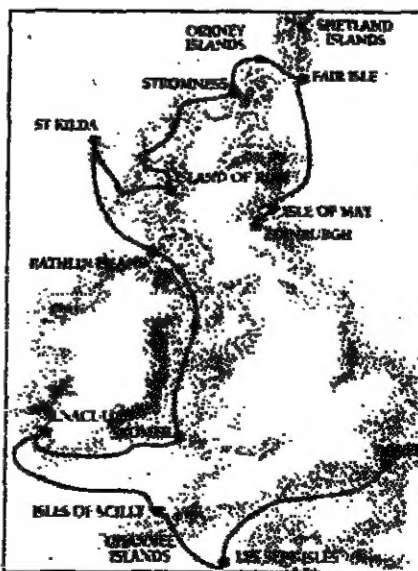
Our Island Odyssey can be as relaxing or as energetic as you want it to be. Whether your main interest lies in ornithology, botany, history or just the appreciation of all things natural you will find a rewarding experience. Tony Soper and his team will be on hand to answer your questions and provide informative after-dinner talks and briefings.

## THE MV CLIPPER ADVENTURER

The 122 passenger vessel Clipper Adventurer is undergoing a total refit (156 million) in a Scandinavian yard this summer and when completed will be one of the finest expedition cruise vessels in the world. All her 63 cabins will have outside views, two lower beds, private shower and toilet and individual temperature controls.

Equipped with stabilisers this ocean going vessel also has the benefit of an ice-strengthened hull, making her suitable for cruising in the polar regions. Like all good expedition ships she has her fleet of zodiacs even in the remotest of places. There is also an 'open bridge' policy for passengers to visit, see the charts and meet the officers.

Good continental and American food is served in the delightful single-acting dining room by Clipper's American staff. There are two lounges and a library/reading room. An unusual feature is a spacious covered promenade which



is ideal for relaxing and viewing and in addition there is an open area on the Boat Deck and an observation platform just below the bridge which is ideal for wildlife viewing.

## THE ITINERARY

Day 1 Dover. Embark Clipper Adventurer in the afternoon and sail.  
Day 2 Cruise through the Channel. Anchor at Les Sept-Îles and explore the oldest bird sanctuary in France.  
Day 3 Isles of Scilly. Spend the day on Tresco visiting the sub-tropical Abbey Gardens and superb white-sand beaches.  
Day 4 Using our zodiacs visit Thracian Island, famous for its exquisite gardens. We expect to find harbour seals on the islets.  
Day 5 In the early morning sail close to Grassholm, home of some 30,000 pairs of gannets. Visit Skomer, home to great numbers of manx shearwaters, kittiwakes and puffins.  
Day 6 Rathlin Island. Drive to the seabird cliffs of the Kibble reserve; towering stacks

with teeming seabird ledges, astonishing numbers of augs, fulmars, shags and gulls. Seals can be found near the harbour.  
Day 7 St Kilda. Home of our greatest concentrations of gannets and fulmars. Weather permitting, we will land on Hirta to see the abandoned village and climb to the seabird cliffs of Conachair. Sail past the Stac-an-Arman and Stac Lee.  
Day 8 Isle of Rum. Anchoring in Loch Scaur, we shall be surrounded by splendid mountain scenery. This has recently been the base for the introduction of the sea eagle. Visit Kinloch Castle.  
Day 9 Cruise the Minch, watching for dolphins and minke whales. Land on the beaches of Handa with its fine bird cliffs.  
Day 10 Cruise past the Old Man of Hoy and berth in the centre of Stromness. Visit the bird-rich interior and see the Mars Howe archaeological site. Mallowland is a bird's paradise with healthy populations of bonxies and loons. Sailing by way of Scapa Flow, pass close to the seabird cliffs of Copmansay.  
Day 11 Fair Isle. The most isolated settlement in the British Isles. Visit the bird observatory (there is always the chance of a fall of migrants, anything from a red-spotted bluebreast to a red-footed falcon).  
Day 12 Isle of May. This superb bird island is the ideal place to come face to face with a thousand puffins and also has a thriving population of eiders and terns. Fulmars, kittiwakes and shags are here in large numbers. Search for seals and in the afternoon circumnavigate the Bass Rock, historic home of Britain's oldest gannery.  
Day 13 Edinburgh. Morning disembarkation.

## PRICES PER PERSON

Prices from £2,795 per person in a category 1 cabin to £3,995 per person in a suite.  
Single cabins from £3,795.  
Price includes: 12 nights aboard the Clipper Adventurer on full board, shore excursions, entrance fees and donations, guest speakers, expedition leader and staff.  
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Grand Comore is the ideal place both to relax and explore with Le Galawa Hotel providing a level of comfort and sophistication against a backdrop of great natural beauty. Being close to the Equator the average temperature year round on Grand Comore is pleasant 75 degrees. Although just 71 kms long and 18 km wide, Grand Comore's spectacular scenery ranges from powdery beaches to fertile fields of spices and fruit; from tropical rain forests to the world's largest active volcanic crater, Mount Karthala.

## Itinerary

Day 1 Depart London Gatwick in the evening and fly with Monarch Airlines Boeing 737 through the night via Laxar and Kilimanjaro to Grand Comore. Day 2 Arrive in Grand Comore and transfer to Le Galawa Beach Hotel for a stay of seven nights. Days 3 to 8 During the week you may relax, enjoy the many



**7 nights half board from £695.00**

facilities of the hotel or explore according to your own wishes. Day 9 Depart with Monarch Airlines on the return

flight via Laxar to Calicut arriving early next morning.

## Departure Dates &amp; Prices

1997 Tuesdays - per person in a twin 7 nights Grand Comore  
November 4, 11, 18, 25 & December 2, 9, 16 - £695.00  
Single room supplement £200.00  
Extra Week - Nov 4 to Dec 16 twin £350.00  
Nov 4 to Dec 16 single £595.00

Price includes: Transportation throughout, 7 nights' accommodation at Le Galawa Beach Hotel on a half board basis, UK airport tax, but not including travel insurance, overseas airport taxes, visa procurement, tipping.

All prices are subject to change. Our express Conditions of Booking in copy which will be sent to you upon receipt of your booking confirmation.

0171-6161000

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21 Dorset Square, London NW1 6GG

Travel Insurance: 0171 409 0376

Our offices are open from 10am to 6pm, 7 days a week. For personal advice, our office hours are 10am to 6pm, 7 days a week.







## CHESS

by Raymond Keene

IN 1947, the Argentine newspaper *El Mundo* published a series of articles with the title, "I am the future world champion". The author was the Polish grandmaster Miguel Najdorf, who had emigrated to Argentina just before the second world war. In his articles, Najdorf explained his claims to the world chess throne recently vacated by the death of the champion, Alexander Alekhine. Najdorf, born in 1910, had just won against the leading Russian contender, Mikhail Botvinnik, at the 1946 Groningen tournament. However, this win, which I give this week with notes, may have done little to further Najdorf's ambitions. In 1948 FIDE, the World Chess Federation charged with organising the tournament to resolve the interregnum occasioned by Alekhine's death, was sympathetic to the USSR chess federation. A match tournament was set up involving six of the best grandmasters: Botvinnik, Smyslov, Reshevsky, Keres, Euwe and Fine. When Fine dropped out there was a strong case for Najdorf to take his place. That he was not invited to do so has been blamed on Botvinnik's intervention. I doubt this was the case but I do believe the Soviet Chess Federation would not have been enthusiastic about a man who had obliterated their foremost contender.

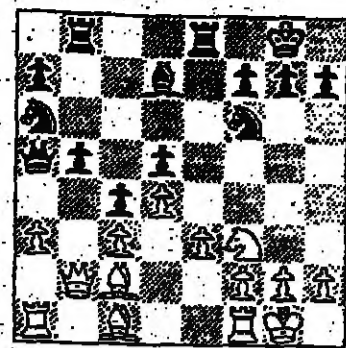
Botvinnik won the world title in 1948 while Najdorf maintained a leading position through the 1950s, but never played a World Championship match. He died last month and this week's game completes *The Times*' tribute to him. For the record, his obituary appeared in *The Times* on July 12.

White: Miguel Najdorf; Black: Mikhail Botvinnik; Groningen 1946. Nimzo-Indian Defence.

1 d4 e6 2 c4 Nf6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2 d5 5 exd5 exd5 6 a3 Bxc3+ 7 bxc3 c5 8 Nf3 Qc5 9 Nc2 Bd7 10 Nc3 Qc4 11 Qb2 Nae 12 e3 c4

Black enjoys a grip on the queen's flank while White has long-term prospects in the centre and with his bishop pair.

13 Nd2 0-0 14 Be2 b5 15 Bd1 Qa5 16 Be2 Rf6 17 0-0 Rabe 18 Nf3



Botvinnik must have believed he was making all the running, but Najdorf counterattacks.

18 ... Qc7 19 Ne5 Bc6 20 B3 Nc5 21 Bc2 Ne4

Sending his knight on a forlorn mission, it was time to defend with 21 ... Nc5? 22 Nxd7 Bxd7 23 Rael

Bc5 24 Qb1 Qb7, with the intention of dominating the e4-square.

22 Qb1 Rb6 23 Qc1 Nd7 24 Qb4 Nf6 25 e4

In the higher strategic sense this advance ensures White's victory.

25 ... Bc5 26 Ng4 Ng6 27 Qh5 Qf7 28 Rael Rb6 29 Ne3 Ne7

If instead 29 ... Nf4 30 Qd7+ followed by 31 Nc4.

30 Qb4 Bc 31 e4

The fastest way to destroy Black's stronghold. If now 31 ... g5 32 exd5

g5 33 g5 Nxd5 34 Bxd5 Bxd5 35 Qe5+ Bg6 36 Nxd5 and White wins.

31 ... f4 32 exd5

By opening up an attack against h7 White wins material.

32 ... Ng6 33 dxc6 Rxc6 34 Bxg6 hxc6 35 Ng2 Rb6 36 Rxe6 Rxc6 37 Nd4 Rf6 38 Qg5 Nxc3 39 Bxc3 Rxd4 40 Kg2 Black resigns.

The winning move for last week's cartoon (above) was submitted by W. Normington of Leeds.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Kavalek - Pietzsch, Sarajevo 1967. In this position, White could capture the knight on e7 with check. An adage in chess states that when you see a good move, you should look for a better one. This is what White did here. What did he find?

Send your answer on a postcard to *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society, which includes a free invitation to the annual dinner. The answer will appear next Saturday.

Last week's solution: 1... Qg2+ Last week's winner: G. Hannam, Stow-on-the-Wald, Glos.

18 ... Qc7 19 Ne5 Bc6 20 B3 Nc5 21 Bc2 Ne4

22 Qb1 Rb6 23 Qc1 Nd7 24 Qb4 Nf6 25 e4

26 ... Bc5 27 Ng4 Ng6 28 Qh5 Qf7 29 Ne3 Ne7

30 Qb4 Bc 31 e4

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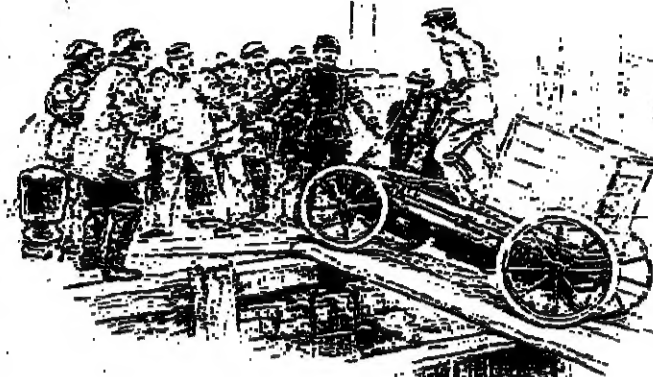
## PUNCHLINE

READERS are invited to write an amusing caption for the cartoon (right), from *The Strand Magazine* (reproduced from Westminster Libraries, Sherlock Holmes Collection, Marylebone Library).

The cartoon will be printed again next week with a caption from those submitted.

Send caption suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to: Strand Caption, 63, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The Editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, August 7.



"Nicole?" "Not 'ere mate. She shot off with a big docker in a Ford Anglia"

The winning caption for last week's cartoon (above) was submitted by W. Normington of Leeds.

## WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

## SOCREE

- a. Wheat flour
- b. A rubber mop
- c. A loved one

## CHATOYANT

- a. Like cats' eyes
- b. Clear thinking
- c. Conversational

## LYCOPodium

- a. A debating platform
- b. Fine powder
- c. A happy hunting ground

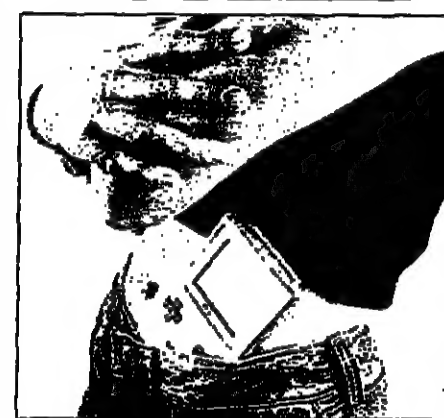
## SIGILLATE

- a. To flog
- b. Overdue
- c. To seal up

Answers on page 20

## COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott



Game Boy is a firm favourite for anyone away from home this summer

and "lead a people devoid of hope to the fabled Dryland".

Ocean also released the Game Boy title I've been looking forward to for months but I have to admit to being disappointed. That great PC title *Worms* has been given the Game Boy treatment but, alas, its best feature is missing. *Worms* was the magnificent two-player game where teams of heavily armed,

chirpy worms annihilate one another. The icing on the cake were the sound effects — catty helium-enhanced comments from the worms themselves. But in this version the worms never squirm as they are blown to pieces — all you hear are a few explosion effects.

Team 17, which developed the game, encountered problems with all the platform translations and since sound files can be bulky it was perhaps to be expected that the wry worm comments would be edited out.

Still, the consolation is that by the end of the year we should see a new original *Worms* title for the PC. Of the other Game Boy platformers warranting a look, there's Ocean's *Super Hunchback*,

starring the bell-hugging Quasimodo but nothing to do with Disney, and Nintendo's *Metroid II: Return of Samus*, a sequel to the NES title *Metroid*. Here, as space hunter Samus Aran, you return to battle on a planet crawling with evil creatures lurking in cavernous corridors, ancient ruins and alien traps.

For sports fans, Nintendo's King

of the Ring is a brutal elimination tournament. You can create your own wrestlers with customised strength and speed and you can play on one or tag team bouts. Acclaim's NFL Quarterback Club '96 sees you fumbling and diving everywhere and, for aficionados, the game features the NFL's top quarterbacks, including Bledsoe, Elway, Favre, Hostetler, Marino and Cunningham.

We have three Game Boys to be won — the standard version and two runners-up Game Boy Pockets. The competition is open to readers up to the age of 16. To enter, list as many three or more letter words you can make using the letters in Game Boy. You should state at the top of the page how many words you have made and then list all of them clearly and neatly. Illegible entries will be disqualified.

Send your entry, with your name, age, address and home telephone number, to: Cyberspace Thirty-Four, Computer Games & Pastimes, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The competition closes on Wednesday August 6. Normal Times competition rules apply and the judges will not enter into additional correspondence.

## THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No 3421: Event by Anon

THE EVENT was not just a 31 of the previous year's, since it was held in 6. Although this was a little 32 for those of us from the 5 area, still a fair number 13, with virtually 10 inconvenience. Even so, there was many a leading 14 (and potential guest's) 22 missing from the gathering.

The perimeter squares, reading clockwise from top left contain a well-known quotation, somewhat modified here. Its unchecked letters provide MY LIGHTS, WE LEFT TIT (That's doubtful, since many an 27d concoction was 8 and consumed!)

## ACROSS

- 7 Preparing for bed? One's syrup in dash! (9)
- 11 Some desperado on Exmoor? (5)
- 12 One on short game once? TIT (9)
- 16 'Fiery Lord' from Cader? A gentlemen and an officer in turn (5)
- 20 Ruffian in gang, your reverse of stupid, wearing a badge (8)
- 21 Good Lord! I'm elected in July (6)
- 23 Hitler, say? Little fellow, possessed by evil strain (10)
- 24 Totals early tax or good returns (7)
- 25 Hard half-mountebank in periodical game (5)
- 26 'Hallo! One's not left out in this! (5)
- 27 Economic theoretician, evangelical about spirit et al (11)
- 33 Elephant bird? (9)
- 35 Small coins used by doctors (not English) (6)
- 36 See through Milton's eyes line from plausible tale (4)

## DOWN

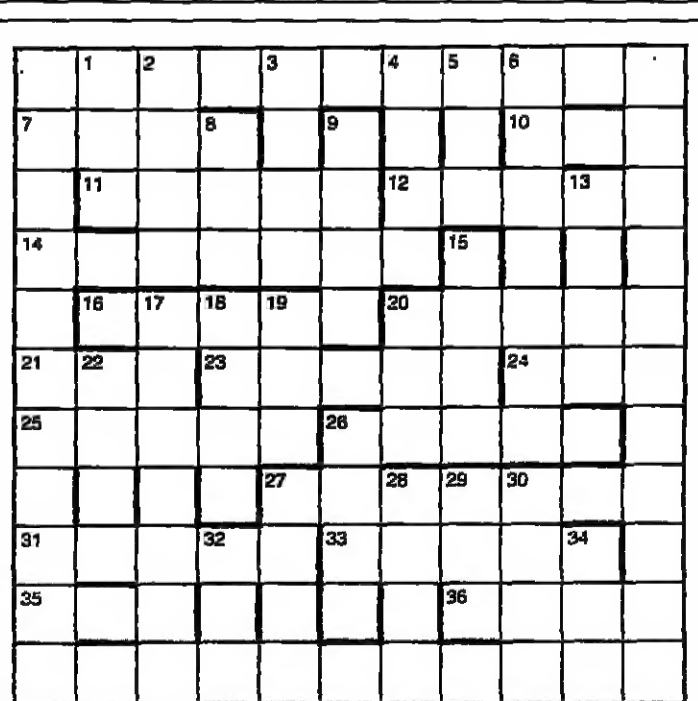
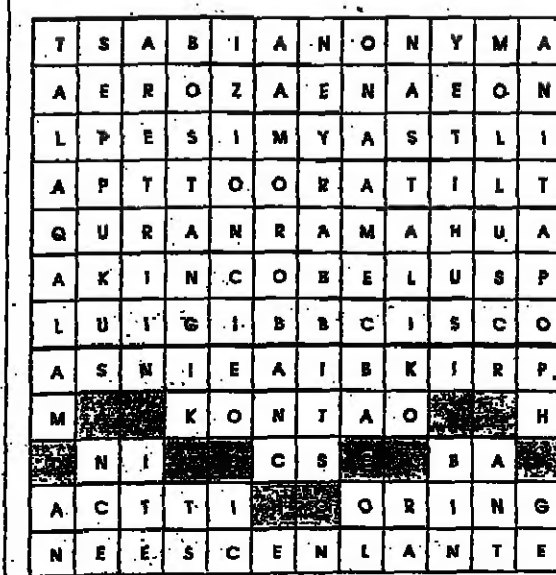
- 1 Recorder's useless without a hole (3)
- 2 Mysterious reverse of card has shiny finish when turned over (8)
- 3 Indiscriminate consumer orders more vino (8)
- 4 Used all cooking pots (7)
- 5 Novelist showing new dimension in character (6)
- 9 Power maniac with change of heart has love-potions (8)
- 15 Bodies in protoplasm — customs impound that (7)
- 17 Ravel rode Haydn's bike (10)
- 18 Jazz run's silver notes (7)
- 19 Group of planes about evil game (7)
- 20 Calm manner surrounds Lord (6)
- 26 Assorted tales can make these (8)
- 27 One beak's merry due to alcohol? (9)
- 28 Spiny regions of cacti happen to be hollow pits (7)
- 29 Greedily desired and had time in capital of Laos first (6)
- 30 Select jury from list of particularly plain men (8)
- 32 Solo film hero in topless Scottish passage, not skilful (7)
- 34 Geographical feature of the Trias (3)

## Solution to No 3418: Splash by Kca

The method of entry above the line mimics David Hockney's composite photographs. The drifting below the line relates to his swimming pool paintings. The title refers to his biography *A Bigger Splash*.

The winner is M. Galloway of Marlow, Bucks.

The five runners up are M. Cansfield of Otley, Yorkshire; D. Samuel of London; Howard Spencer of Bury, Lancashire; D. Williams of Lamberant, France; T. Allen of Bolton, Lancashire.



## LISTENER CROSSWORD No 3421

in association with Waterstone's

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

Cut out and send the completed crossword and coupon above to The Listener Crossword No 3421, 63 Green Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6HE, by Thursday, August 14.

W  
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